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ABSTRACT

This conference proceedings of the Australian Council for Adult Literacy contains the following papers: "'But I'm Not a Therapist'--The Challenge of Creating Effective Literacy Learning for Survivors of Trauma" (Horsman); "Future Studies, Postmodernism, and Adult Literacy" (Cross); "Collaboration and Compliance in the Workplace" (Scheeres, Solomon); "What's Whiteness Got to Do with It? Exploring Assumptions about Cultural Difference and Everyday Literacy Practices" (Shore); "Interactive Learning--Enterprise Based Training into the New Millennium" (Babalis); "Digging Deeper: A Strategy for Text Analysis with Indigenous Students" (Beattie); "Second Language Learners Operate on the Incomplete and Inaccurate Knowledge of the Target Language" (Bhela); "Throw Them a Line: Tips for Assisting Students to Survive Their First Semester at University" (Bickmore-Brand); "Computer Use in Adult Literacy in South Australia" (Bray); "Examining the Accounts of Homeless People's Needs to Determine a Role for Language, Literacy, and Numeracy Training" (Castleton); "Getting on the Same Line: Utilising a Concept Attainment Model of Teaching in the Numeracy Classroom" (Ciampa); "Toeing the Line: Incorporating the Key Competencies into Numeracy Sessions" (Ciampa); "Technological Tangles in Adult Literacy Education" (Harreveld); "Lining Up Secondary Students for Adult Literacy Programs" (Hill); "Contractor Safety Training Resources" (Hummel); "Receipting Rate Payments: How Well Are These Skills Captured in the Office-Administrative Standards for Level Three Trainees" (Kelly); "Certificate I in Initial Adult Literacy and Numeracy Multimedia Student Resources" (McGlynn); "Communication Matters: Towards Self Management of Communication Needs: A Best Practice Case Study in a Remote Mine Site" (McRae); "Language Literacy and Numeracy in the Entertainment Industry" (Moon); "'They Don't Have to Think, We've Got

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Managers': The Fine Line between 'Workplace Communication Skills' and 'Literacy at Work'" (Morgan-Williams); "Literacy on the Production Line;" "Literacy and Numeracy Online" (Purcell, Strempel); "ALBE [Adult Literacy and Basic Education] Teachers on the Front Line of Pedagogical 'Good Practice'" (Sanguinetti); "Presentation of a Model for On-Line Assessment and Moderation Using the Certificates in General Education for Adults and Incorporating the National Reporting System" (Soccio); "Students as Partners in Developing On-Line Teaching" (Le et al.); "Interlanguage in a University Context" (Le et al.); "Pegs for Literacy" (Trenerry); "Using Email as a 'Backdoor' to Literacy" (Walker, Coflin); "Sweet Words: A Case Study in a Confectionery Enterprise" (Lee); "Benchmarking to Success" (Welch); and "Between a Rock and a Hard Place: Challenges for a National Literacy Organization" (Horsman). (YLB)

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Australian Council For Adult Literacy

21st National Conference

Literacy on the Line

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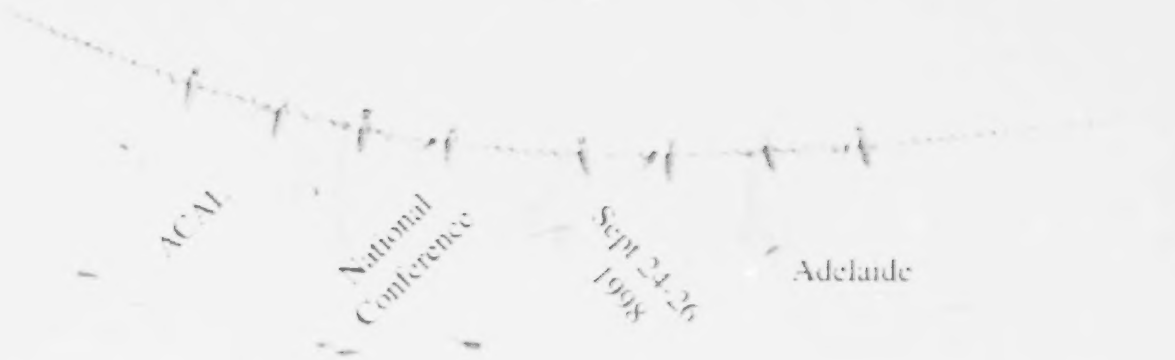

Literacy on the Line

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DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT

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WELCOME

South Australian adult literacy workers welcome you to the Australian Council for Adult Literacy's 21st National Conference *Literacy on the Line*. As is common with many national conferences, we began preparing for this conference well over 12 months ago.

At the time and even now, the theme of *Literacy on the Line* captured our imaginations. We played around with ideas on the theme knowing that this play with words also highlighted many of the tensions and dilemmas facing workers in the late 1990s.

We knew that literacy was in the *Headlines*. In fact since beginning planning for the conference we have seen the effects of the second survey on Australian literacy. In some states we have noted that the issues facing adults have been silenced in deference to models of literacy which believe if only we can "inoculate" children against the "problem" then we would have no "adult literacy problem". Experienced adult literacy workers know better.

During the last year many teachers have told us that their work places feel, at times, like battlefields. They are at the "front" making decisions about curriculum, programming issues, funding matters and assessment and reporting practices. At the same time many are coming to terms with the increasing influence of competitive tendering, its effects on their work and the impact it has on both professional and personal relationships with other colleagues. Our *Frontline* strand attempts to pick up on many of these issues.

Throughout all of this adults, as literacy learners, continue to take up literacy learning. Some do this willingly as part of an effort to improve job opportunities, others are less willing and the notion of the volunteer learner needs to be rethought as government demands and workplace restructuring continue to influence learners' "choices". Our *Production line* theme explores many of these issues. Other learners are more concerned with improving their general ability to use language and literacy in their wider lives. Yes, the conference planning committee believed that learning for and about life (our *Lifelines* theme) was an important aspect of literacy learning and should not be swamped by discourses of "learning for earning".

Last but by no means least we were very aware of the ways in which understandings about information literacy and technology are shaping literacy educators' work and learners' options to be involved in literacy learning. Responses to these issues varied from seeing online learning as an opportunity, to concern and hesitancy over the ways in which technology changes interaction between learners themselves, as well as changing the nature of the educator/learner relationship. These issues and more are explored in the *Online* strand of the conference.

The papers presented here do not include all sessions presented at the conference, but they do provide an insight into the kinds of conversations people will have over the three days. Conferences are an important means of renewal for adult literacy workers. We hope you enjoy your time here and move on personally and professionally renewed by the presentations, the papers, the coffee chats and quiet moments available to you over the next few days.

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KEY NOTE SPEAKERS

"But I'm Not A Therapist" - The challenge of creating effective literacy learning for survivors of trauma

Jennifer Horsman

Introduction

Learners may start in literacy or other education programs with desperate hope to finally improve their literacy skills or education, and begin to make essential changes in their lives. Women who live with daily violence may believe that improved literacy skills will be a first step towards enough education to find a paid job and escape. However, if there is no acknowledgment of the impacts of trauma on learning, rather than a chance to improve their literacy skills and succeed, learners may get only a chance to fail, to confirm to themselves that they really cannot learn. Learners and workers alike may become frustrated, despairing over the lack of possibilities for real change.

In recent research, I looked at the impact of violence on women's literacy learning and program participation, in order to develop approaches to literacy work to help women learn better. My interviews involved literacy workers, literacy learners, therapists, counsellors and organizational staff in focus group sessions, individual interviews of various lengths and through computer networks. I concentrated on two key questions: What impacts of abuse do you see in your literacy program/your work? How can/should literacy programs address these impacts of violence? I interviewed women (and a few men) in five regions of Canada - British Columbia, The Prairies, Central Canada, Atlantic Canada and the North.

For the most part little is written or said about the links between violence and literacy. Anecdotal accounts of literacy workers who have discovered that all, or most, of the students in a class have experienced sexual or physical abuse as children, certainly suggest that a formal study might reveal that horrifyingly high numbers of adults - both women and men - in literacy programs experienced abuse as children. Although people often ask me about the statistics, I decided not to focus on that question. For me, the most pressing question is not how many literacy learners have experienced trauma but how literacy programs can teach most effectively. Even if the numbers of women in literacy programs who have experienced violence are no higher than the general population, we still need to know how to carry out literacy work in ways which are inclusive and effective for women who have survived trauma. We have to assume that every class will include at least some with this experience.

Exploring Violence and Trauma

The breadth of violence I heard about in relation to literacy during interviews and related reading gives an indication of the complex ways violence and its aftermath enters into the adult education setting. As I talked to people and read for this project, I heard layer upon layer of violent experiences, many of which I had not previously thought about. Literacy workers described a range of violence they had seen or heard about in their classrooms, and spoke of feeling "inept" as they wondered how to respond to support learners and their learning.

Experience of trauma and its aftermath - whether in childhood or adulthood - is likely the present reality for many, if not most, literacy learners. In literacy programming, we cannot take refuge in the silence about such trauma, it is vividly present in the classroom in many dimensions. The experience of trauma cannot be framed as "abnormal" and individualized, we cannot fall into the trap of suggesting that learners can go away and "heal" from the trauma and come back to class when they are ready to learn. In literacy programming we must recognize the effects of trauma and create literacy opportunities that are viable for learners who are "familiar with trauma", enabling them to learn while they continue to "live beside the violation". To maintain silence about the extent of violence in society, or to understand their experience in terms of pathology and ill-health is to fail learners. Survivors of

trauma are like canaries in the mine, rather than seeing them as dysfunctional, we need to recognize that they warn society about the dangers of normalized violence. We should honour the increased sensitivities that living with trauma brings, and design literacy programming that supports learners to value themselves and develop their literacy skills.

Beyond Appearing "Normal": "Hidden" Impacts of Trauma

The impacts of trauma I heard about from the therapists, counsellors and literacy workers that I interviewed, led me to an exploration of these impacts and an examination of new possibilities for literacy practice. A range of issues, that are not usually visible take energy away from the literacy learning process for many students who are survivors of trauma. These issues create, in themselves, areas of learning that women must struggle with if they are to be successfully "present" in the classroom and learn to read. The complexity of learners' "presence", their lack of comfort with ambiguity, a tendency to see everything as "all or nothing", are overarching challenges which interlock with a series of issues impinging on literacy learning. These issues include building trust, establishing boundaries, deciding which stories to tell, learning to move out of crises and assessing the level of safety in the class or group.

Seeing the complexity of awareness for both workers and learners around issues like presence, trust, boundaries and crises adds an awareness to why learning to read is such a difficult and lengthy process. Where the struggles around each of these issues are carried out by the literacy learner in private because to reveal her difficulties in these areas is to be judged "abnormal", then the energy required is compounded. Energy is needed not only to struggle with the difficulties, but also to hide this struggle. It is crucial, therefore, that within the literacy program, the range of what is normal is broadened and the discourse is opened up to talk about the struggles that many learners will have in a broad range of areas. If the challenges learners face are an active part of the curriculum, then all learners can benefit. The challenges that need to become part of the curriculum include exploring what it takes to be fully present in the classroom and the knowledge gained from the times of less presence; discovering a deeper understanding of ambiguity and middle ground rather than staying with the stark contrasts of all or nothing; considering crises and how to live both in and out of crisis; examining questions of trust in terms of the possibility of trusting their own knowledge and trusting others in the class or group not to judge and put them down; learning to set boundaries and respect the boundaries of others; deciding which stories to tell when; and creating a safer place to learn.

Learning in the Context of Trauma: The Challenge of Setting Goals

The definition of trauma used by Judith Herman reveals connections between literacy and trauma. Herman states that trauma is caused by events which "overwhelm the ordinary systems of care that give people a sense of control, connection and meaning" (Herman, 1992, p.33). Many writers have suggested that therapy for trauma victims should be directed at helping the survivor to regain a sense of control, connection and meaning in her life. I suggest that a shift away from addressing these issues solely as aspects of individual healing and toward a focus on control, connection and meaning is integral to literacy learning. Control, connection and meaning are all centrally connected to the tasks of setting goals, a key aspect of how literacy programming is increasingly being organized. Setting goals may seem a straightforward task, where simple skills can be taught to those who have difficulty. But for survivors of trauma, setting goals is far from simple. The difficulty is not simply skills acquisition, but a far more complex intertwining of issues, requiring more nuanced learning.

Control is an important terrain for those who have experienced trauma. Feeling out of control, trying to regain control, not wanting to own any control, controlling in hidden manipulative ways, feeling responsible, disowning responsibility, all of this is a complex and fraught area. Seeking control, but feeling helpless and believing that control is an impossibility, is a contradictory dynamic. Being in control also entails being responsible, being blamed and blaming oneself. This complex dynamic around control is important within literacy. Many literacy programs stress learner-centred learning, learners designing their own individualized plan, controlling their own learning and setting goals. Some also seek to involve learners in sharing control of the program through participating on committees or boards of directors. This "mine field" is often entered without preparation or even

awareness of how complex and problematic raising control issues may be for some literacy learners as well as for some workers.

More and more in adult literacy work, the discourse of identifying measurable outcomes, (or at least "observable" outcomes) and organizing learning around learners own goals is the dominant discourse that organizes literacy practice. It is hard to question such an approach. Who doesn't want learners to shape their goals and learn material that will help them meet their goals? Yet for survivors of trauma, working with the complexity of control, connection and meaning, goal setting may be a challenging, if not impossible demand, because to set goals you have to believe that you have some possibility of control, to have connection at least to the self, and to believe that life can have meaning.

Engaging the Whole Person in Learning

Recognizing the whole person offers new potential for literacy learning. My recognition of four aspects of the person came primarily from the various Canadian First Nations educators I talked to. They told me about the concept of the Medicine Wheel and of balance between four aspects of the person - body, mind, emotion and spirit. Aline LaFlamme, a metis healer in the Northwest Territories, made the concept most powerfully clear when she drew me the Medicine Wheel. Instead of a balance between the four quadrants, she drew most of the circle as the mind, two tiny "quadrants" for the body and emotions, and an even smaller section for the spirit. She said her drawing illustrated the lack of balance in North American society. She felt that the mind is given far too much weight. Aline helped me to see that, given that lack of balance, it is not surprising that literacy learners who are not judged as excelling in the mind, often feel that they are not valued. As I described this off-balance Wheel, a survivor and advisor to the project used it to illustrate that "healing" for individuals can be problematic if we think of healing as learning to function better in a "sick", off-balance world.

Looking at the person in terms of four aspects challenged me to think about how the damage I heard about in my interviews could also lead to new possibilities for literacy work and how a focus on the body, mind, emotions and spirit could be more than just addressing "damage". It could be a process where each aspect was fully engaged in a creative learning process, where literacy would be more fully holistic and part of a "healing" process not only of the individual but of the educational process. Canadian First Nations literacy workers have begun to create models appropriate to their community. The challenge now remains for other communities to explore appropriate models. A further question - whether such models will be an alternative in literacy, leaving the mainstream unchallenged, or whether such shifts can be seen as valuable for all literacy learners - remains. Within literacy learning, there is potential to move away from diagnostic models which pathologize those who have experienced trauma and, instead, to support all literacy learners in learning and claiming their power and questioning the concept of "normal life".

Bridging the Divide between Literacy and Therapy

Traditionally, literacy and therapy are seen as entirely separate. Frequently, however, literacy workers are called upon to carry out a counselling role, though many feel unprepared to and unclear whether they should. There is tension between the value of clarity about boundaries between therapy and literacy and the value of recognizing that the division between the two fields is arbitrary and unreal. Through creating a variety of bridges between the two disciplines, and making therapy and counselling more visible within literacy programs, the frame that implies impacts of trauma are only to be addressed in isolation between a woman and her therapist (so that a woman can return to "normal" and resume ordinary life as soon as possible), is interrupted. It is important both to recognize the value of individual therapy and also to move away from assumptions that a woman should go away and heal and come back to literacy when she is "better".

Listening to the range of options currently available inside and outside literacy programs, it was obvious that no single answer would address the question of appropriate links with counselling organizations, or answer whether literacy workers need to be trained in counselling. The situations of literacy workers are so diverse. It did seem crucial that all programs recognize that some learners will be dealing with issues of trauma and may need access to culturally appropriate counselling or other services. This means programs need to assess what services are available in their community, and

consider what capacity is needed within the programs to make good links and provide solid support for learners who are continuing with their learning in the program, and also seeking counselling.

Some knowledge of counselling within a program, and strong links with counselling services - whether offered internally or by another organization or organizations - would enable a program to function in a more balanced fashion. Few programs currently explore the links they might be able to generate with outside counselling programs or counselling departments in their institution. Programs could build greater visibility and more creative alternative possibilities for learners getting counselling support.

Examining the Costs of Bearing Witness

Literacy workers experience an enormous number of challenges in their work. The contradictory pressures in relation to violence silence talk about the extent of violence that they and learners experience, while at the same time leading many workers to believe they should be able to listen to anything learners want to share, provide exhaustive support to learners and successfully teach everyone to read in record time. Alongside such tension is the continual pressure in literacy for workers to do enormous amounts of work of all sorts, often for little pay, benefits or appreciation. Workers are frequently exhausted, frustrated and question whether their work makes a difference, while continually feeling pressure to work a little harder, show more progress and justify the value of their work. For those paid workers who work alongside volunteers, the pressure to take on extra volunteer hours themselves, as well as provide adequate training and support for the volunteers who may require much energy - as they need also to be listened to, encouraged, guided and appreciated may create a whole other set of demands.

Women working in literacy bear witness to the violence in learners' lives. Sometimes they also experience an increased threat of violence in their own lives, because of their role creating a safer space for literacy learning. Many literacy workers feel they have little option but to hear disclosures of violence when learners ask. Whether workers are experienced at setting boundaries or not, there is a cost to themselves and a limit to what else they can take on in their lives as a consequence of their work in literacy. The day-to-day violence in some programs, and the level of anger vented upon workers, is experienced as toxic. In other programs, workers may be less aware of what causes the exhaustion they feel at the end of the day. Workers deal with witnessing pain through disclosures and through observing learners' lives. They also frequently struggle with feeling what they offer is inadequate. Frequently literacy workers spoke about how rarely the many dimensions of issues of violence were discussed in their programs or local networks. Yet even the possibility of taking up these issues in networks and programs will create more work for literacy workers themselves. Workers need a wide variety of places to talk to address these issues. They need peer support and supervision and far greater recognition of the cost of the work they do. They need support and encouragement to recognize their own needs and to look after themselves carefully.

Conclusion

This research challenges the literacy field to break the silences about violence in a myriad of ways. We must create new curriculum, discover new ways of working that normalize the challenges many literacy learners bring to their learning. We must recognize the complexity of many of the demands made in literacy work and provide innovative supports for learners to explore control, connection and meaning, and to learn to set goals and imagine possible change in their lives. Holistic programming may offer innovative ways forward. Links between literacy organizations and organizations offering counselling could support learners' access to counselling and the creation of new program models that do not exclude issues of trauma from learning. Workers need a variety of supports if they are to nurture themselves, to work supportively with learners, to create new options for programming and repeatedly break the silence about the violence in women's lives and make the links between the aftermath of trauma and difficulties with learning.

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Notes

In this short paper I cannot list the names of the many people who spent time talking to me, or all the people who supported the process. I can only offer a collective thank you to the many people who are part of this work. Many people contributed their wisdom to the process which brought together the ideas and analysis on these pages.

"But I'm Not a Therapist": Furthering Discussion about Literacy Work with Survivors of Trauma introduces these research findings in more detail. It is available from CCLOW: (416) 699-1909 or fax (416) 699-2145, or cclow@web.net, or on the internet at http://alphacom.gbrownc.on.ca I am currently working on a book to explore the findings in depth. (For more information contact CCLOW or the author: jhorsman@idirect.com)

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Future studies, postmodernism and adult literacy

Jack Cross

The aim of this address is to bring together three discourses:

- Future Studies
- Postmodernism as a Megatrend
- Literacy - in its adult application.

This provides a broad overview of the context in which we all must now operate.

The Nature Of Future Studies

It is useful to understand the history of Future Studies as well as some of its methodology in order to understand the status of the predictions made. Future Studies is neither fact nor wild conjecture. In this regard it is useful to distinguish between prophecy and future studies. Prophecy deals in metaphorical language and can extend far into the future. It is open to continuous reinterpretation and its purpose is to reassure people in difficult times. Take as an example the use of Nostradamus' prophecy in the contemporary context. Future studies is much more down to earth and extensively uses extrapolation. It seldom goes more than thirty years into the future.

The subject Future Studies has passed through at least four major phases, each building upon the other:

1. It started about 1949 in some of the military think-tanks of USA, such as the Rand Corporation in California. These think-tanks developed many of the techniques used by Futurists, such as Trend Extrapolation, Scenarios, Delphi Techniques, Analogy Thinking.

A famous book from this stage is:

Herman Kahn (1960) **On Thermonucluear War**.

2. From the late 1950s to the 1970s Future Studies was dominated by the ecology movement. This stage illustrates that the prime goal of Future Studies is to influence decisions in the present.

   Important books from this stage include:

   Rachel Carson (1962) **The Silent Spring**.
   Denis Meadows et al (1972) **The Limits to Growth**.

3. The third stage shifted the emphasis to the phenomenon of rapid social change itself and people's capacity to cope.

   The key book from this period is:

   Alvin Toffler (1970) **Future Shock.**

4. The fourth and current stage is characterised by an emphasis on technology and future change. We are now confronted by **three** revolutions:

- micro-chip revolution, which has revolutionised communications and robotics;
- bio-tech revolution, which can produce synthetic materials, such as synthetic drugs and foods;
- ceramics or material science revolution, the development of Man-made materials to replace natural materials like wool.

These three revolutions are a threat to the continuation of Australia's affluence, which has depended on exporting natural materials overseas - *Death of the lucky Country*, Donald Horne.

Books from this period include:

Daniel Bell (1973) **The Coming of the Post-Industrial Society**.
Alvin Toffler (1984) **The Third Wave**.
John Naisbitt (1982) **Megatrends**.
John Naisbitt (1985) **Re-Inventing the Corporation**.
Barry Jones (1982) (1990) **Sleepers Wake**.
Kahn, H. and Pepper, T. (1980) **Will She Be Right The Future of Australia**.
Donald Horne (1988) **Think - or Perish**.

The fourth phase has led to the growth of futurology institutes, such as: The Commission for the Future (1983) in Melbourne.

Methodology used in Future Studies

1. Futurists use Trend Extrapolation as one of the major methods. This involves 1) Trend Analysis, gathering empirical evidence about current trends; 2) Extrapolation, projecting these trends into the future. Trend Extrapolation is based on the Continuity Principle in history. One way of coming to a consensus about current trends is to use the Delphi Technique. Trend Extrapolation involves high level inductive conjectures as well as hypothetical-deductive reasoning.

2. Not Ideology free. The current trend we choose to emphasise is to some extent influenced by our ideology: that is, *our beliefs, values, empirical evidences organised in a logical system, which acts as a guide to social action*. Two famous twentieth century ideologies have particularly influenced the practice of Future Studies:

    - Marxism, particularly the Marxist emphasis on the changes in the technology of production as a major cause of social change and the flow through of history. Following this ideology, Daniel Bell divides modern history into Pre-Industrial, Industrial and Post-Industrial phases.

    - Existentialism, particularly the idea that we create the future ourselves, by the decisions we make now in coping with the problems of existence.

3. Futurists deal in probabilities, never certainties. Concept of *Scenarios*, alternative futures or even imagined futures. Scenarios are quantified by fixing them at certain points of time and expressing them in percentiles: e.g. there will be a 10% possibility of Y occurring in 10 years times. Futurists tend to rule out the *Catastrophe Scenario*.

4. Futurists distinguish between *Probable* futures and *Preferable* Futures. Probable Futures are based on empirical evidence about current trends, extrapolated into the future. Preferable Futures are based on value judgments about what we would *prefer* to see in the future, which takes us back to our criteria. It follows also that we can talk about Probable *Scenarios* and Preferable Scenarios.

5. Futurists predict the future, with the intention of influencing present decisions - that is, whether to support, modify, or work against the predicted trends. The ecology movement is particularly successful at using future predictions to marshall opinion against trends. The art of controlling the future is somehow to match up Probable Futures and Preferable Futures.

6. Futurists tend to concentrate on large-scale structural changes in society - called *Megatrends*. Three major causes of social change are:

1) ideological change, difficult to predict;
2) political change, difficult to predict;
3) structural change, easier to predict, because has a long lead-time and cannot be turned around quickly. Examples: population trends; trade trends; industrial trends; environmental trends, like the Greenhouse Effect.

Postmodernism As A Megatrend

In the **cultural domain** the major megatrend today is summed up under the heading of Postmodernism. What does it mean?

Postmodernism is used to describe a new mood arising towards the end of the twentieth century (towards the end of the millennium), which is rejecting many modern ideas and practices. That is, rejecting so-called modern discourses. Modern discourse is defined as that thought and action which began mainly with the Enlightenment in the eighteenth century and inspired people for so long, at least up the 1950s and even now.

Postmodernism is an interim name for a transition period.

Some reasons given for this **loss of faith** in modernism are:

1. Disillusionment - the modern dream of a progressive, just world where people are reasonably content has not eventuated. In part this disillusion, is linked to the failure of communism. Many postmodernists started out as Marxists.

2. Postmodernism is the new superstructure thrown up by the new means of production based on information technology - a Marxist view. New technology creates a world in which the construct is more important than the real - constructed news, cyberspace, hyper-reality.

3. Postmodernism is an end of century, end of millennium mood.

4. Postmodernism is the final decline of Western civilisation - a conservative view, e.g. Arnold Toynbee first used the term postmodernism in this conservative sense in 1947.

5. It is the impact of the New Physics, with its emphasis on 'the uncertainty principle' - made famous by scientists like Werner Heisenberg. In the basic physical universe nothing is ever quite fixed or certain. The social sciences and arts at last catching up.

6. Break theory of history - that history is characterised by smooth periods, followed by occasional chaotic periods for which there is no rational explanation - a radical postmodern view.

Note: The above reasons are not mutually exclusive. May be multiple causes.

Key Ideas

What aspects of modern discourse are being challenged by postmodern thinkers?

1) • **They reject the idea that representation is a copy of the real world**. That you can be trained to observe the real world objectively, then represent or describe it in words, images and formula. This is a fundamental idea behind modern science, social science, realism in the arts, etc. To be **true**, representation must be a facsimile, an exact fit to the world out there.

• Main criticism of representation is that different cultures seem to represent the world differently.

- Postmodernists replace objective representation with the claim that representations are based on other representations, rather than descriptions of the real world. This is the Structuralist thesis: that in order to make sense out of the bewildering array of experiences we see the world through 'categories of understanding' (Immanuel Kant). For instance an Aboriginal person would use different concepts to make sense of experience than a European. These categories of understanding or schema tend to take on a life of their own: one concept stimulates the next, which stimulates the next, until you have whole chains of signifiers (Derrida's word) or metaphors. This is how culture is constructed.

  As an example of constructions leading on to other constructions, **Jacques Derrida** (1930-) argues that Westerners tend to construct their ideas in **binaries** (either - or constructions), in which one binary is privileged over the other. For instance: life and death, male and female, beauty and ugly, educated and uneducated, etc. **Deconstruction** (a method) sets out to **destabilise** these binaries, that is, demonstrate that they do not stand up to careful scrutiny. There is an **undecidability** (key Derrida concept) between binaries. For instance most binaries get their meaning from one another (take life and death, male and female); as a result they are so interdependent that one cannot possibly be superior to the other.

  Inter-textual Studies (term made famous by Julia Kristeva) is studying the relationships between texts. Another key method. A text is a particular construction of reality which can be represented in words, but is not limited to words - book, theory, work of art, action, etc.

- Problem: Without representation referring to a real world, knowledge soon becomes wheels within wheels, inter-textual studies built on inter-textual studies. Deconstruction works well initially as a tool of criticism, but eventually it leads to profound **scepticism.** Sometimes called 'post postmodern paralysis'. Jean Baudrillard calls it 'the void'. All constructions are eventually shown to have feet of clay. One construction is no better than another. Yet in fact not all discourses seems to be the same: e.g. scientific discourse seems to have the power of prediction.

  One of the implications of all this is that there is no essential difference between high culture (such as the canon and the classics) and pop culture.

  Another implication is that it privileges the text over the author, or creative genius. See definition of a text above. By a process of intuition authors pick up on changing constructions of reality. They do not invent new ideas - called 'the death of the author'. The reader or critic is also privileged: it is not what the author meant to say that counts, it is how the reader or critic interprets it.

  Another implication is that meanings are never quite fixed.

2) - **Postmodernists reject the idea of Grand Theory** (or meta-narrative or totalising discourses): that is, theories which try to explain all or most aspects of reality. A good example of Grand Theory is Marxism as used in the Soviet Union. Or universalist theories of feminism, such as patriarchy as a general theory. Or universalist religions. Or scientism - seeking to explain everything with science.

- Main criticism of Grand Theory is that it can lead to authoritarianism, as in the Soviet Union. The so-called 'tyranny of Truth' with a capital 'T'. For instance, Soviet Marxism (as opposed to Marx) set out to give right answers for everything

- They replace Grand Theory with localised conceptions of truth, that is many subcultures each with their own version of truth. This protects us against tyranny and encourages toleration. The 'return to humility' - an acknowledgement that we still have no great answers to the great questions.

- The new approach to truth is summed up in statements like this: Truth depends on who speaks, to whom, in what context. Truth is always being contested. The search for universal truth is the biggest wild goose chase in history.

Julia Kristeva calls it: 'a world of fragmented images'.

- Problem: What then do you do about big questions such as the ecology of the globe, or the unequal distribution of resources in the world?

3) • **Postmodernists reject the modernist concept of Humanism, or common humanity**. Much modern thought and action was inspired by humanism. Humanists held that all human beings 1) can consciously improve themselves 2) and they do so by actualising the great innate potentials that they all share in common. Potentials such as rationality, objectivity, compassion, common interest, complex communication through language especially written language, etc. And this provides a program by which we can reform the **whole of humanity**.

- Their main criticism of humanism as defined by modernists, is that when it came to describing these humane potentials they turned out to be mainly European. Even the most humane people could find little in Aboriginal culture that fitted the pattern.

- In some contexts, replaced by a return to tribalism or localised nationalism. But often according to Benedict Anderson, not the old face to face tribalism, but imagined communities constructed through the media. See his book **Imagined Communities** (1983).

Or in other contexts, replaced by a trend towards pluralism: many individual values, many beliefs, many subcultures, multiculturalism. Trend in Australia.

Also move towards cultural relativism: e.g. 'There is nothing that is intrinsically sexist. It all depends on context' - Catharine Lumby third wave feminist.

- Problem: There is the negative side of tribalism - groups get their solidarity by warring with other groups. Also, the disadvantages of extreme multiculturalism - the society falls apart.

How do these trends fit with the opposite trend towards the global market place? Benedict Anderson believes that some tribalism is a local defence against the threat of transnational capitalism.

Simon Marginson (Harry Penny Lecture 1997) pointed out that the decline in modernism is leading to a decline in respect for **teachers**. Teachers no longer seen as special experts capable of unlocking great human potential.

4) • **Postmodernists reject the modernist emphasis on progress** - based on linial time. Progress is the belief that humanity can be made better and better, according to some supra-cultural outside standard. It is the idea of the march of civilisation. At its most optimistic there was the belief that there is an inevitable progress of humanity. This is the teleological view, that history is leading to some great purpose or culmination. Modern discourse privileges words likes: emancipation, liberation, reform, revolution, civilisation.

- Their main criticism of the modern dream of progress is that it was formed before the atomic bomb and the possibility of ecological disaster.

- Replaced by 1) an emphasis on the eternal present, 'grab the essence of the now' 2) non linial views of time - such as psychological time and zigzag time. 3) the break theory of history - that history jumps all over the place 4) chaos theory. In his book **A Brief History of Time** (1989) Stephen Hawking argues that imaginary time is real time.

Art is simply snapshots of the present.

Another implication is that contemporary art has no stable referents to the past. As a result you can incorporate all kinds of historical styles.

- Problem: Can you plan without a view of the future?

  An alternative theory is that progress once existed but now has stopped. This is the first generation in two hundred years not to be inspired by some grand alternative vision. What people have settled for is individual freedom and consumerism as the end of progress. See **The End of History and the Last Man (1992) by Francis Fukuyama**.

  In contrast to progress, traditional Chinese have the theory of cyclic history - good times, bad times, good times, bad times.

5) • **Rejection of the autonomous existential subject or I**. That is, that each of us has the power to make autonomous decisions and to some extent determine our own personality and destiny.

- Main criticism of the **autonomous** self is that it is almost a religious concept. Something to do with choosing your own salvation.

- Replaced by an emphasis on the **constructed self**. That we are all a product of the particular constructions of reality which we happen to inherit - often operating at an unconscious level. Man does not create language; language creates Man. The Structuralist Thesis.

  Implications: 1) stress the power of culture often operating on the unconscious 2) the death of the author - geniuses do not create new ideas; they make conscious random changes in culture 3) creation as appropriation 4) that the personal search for deep meaning is a wild goose chase. As a result, we should prefer the word 'invention' to 'creation'.

- Problem: How do you then break the cycle? If there is no critically aware, autonomous self, societies must randomly reproduce themselves according to some chaos principle.

- Problem: End of the idea of a liberal education (which assumes an autonomous self reflecting learner) in favour of training and conditioning.

6) • **Postmodernists reject the modernist idea that the State (government, parliament, judiciary, etc.) is the centre of politics**. Also reject the Marxist and Freudian idea that the oppressive state is the main source of our oppression.

- Their main criticism: that all this emphasis on the centrality of the state does not match the way politics works today - especially in the global market place dominated by transnational companies. They also point out that the state is not forever: before the state became the centre of politics in the eighteenth century, kings and queens were the centre of politics.

- Replaced by the idea that the centre of political action today is in **networking**. By networking is meant millions of people at all levels exerting pressure on one another, making links, opposing links, accepting one another, excluding one another. Sometimes called the 'micro-physics of power'. Parliament as a central institution of the state is now tending to become a rubber stamp for deals made outside.

- Side by side with the decline of the state is the decline of broad ideology: that is, system of ideas, such as socialism, liberalism, conservatism about what government should do for society in general. The so-called 'end of ideology'. The decline of ideology is replaced by an emphasis 1) on single issue politics 2) pressure groups 3) and on personality politics.

- Problem: Does not this lead to a chaotic directionless society? Because power is everywhere; it is nowhere. How to protect the weak against the strong in this battle of the pressure groups?

Michel Foucault (1926-1984) in particular was interested in the link between constructions and power. All constructions (he argued) inevitably have power implications. With all constructions there are winners and losers. As constructions are pushed to the centre, others and their advocates are pushed to the outer. He rejected the repressive theory of power made famous by Marx and Freud: that power is held by a group at the top (the so-called Ruling Class) who oppress the others - in favour of a network theory of power: that power is everywhere, but unequal. That people use discourses (constructions) to pressure one another and to resist one another in a myriad of chaotic interacting power relationships. Foucault believed that the way to redistribute power is to reclaim the experience of marginalised people - such as homosexuals, indigenous peoples, medical patients, prisoners, (See **Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison**).

7) • **Postmodernism and Commercialism**. There is no necessary connection between the two. 1) But if truth is localised 2) there is no universal humanity 3) the future is precarious 4) and governments have little real control - how does one make society work?

• One answer is to leave it to the magic of the market. If it sells it is good, if it does not it is bad. Could apply this principle evenly to education, the arts, consumer goods.

Art (says Jean Baudrillard) is simply the consumption of signs.

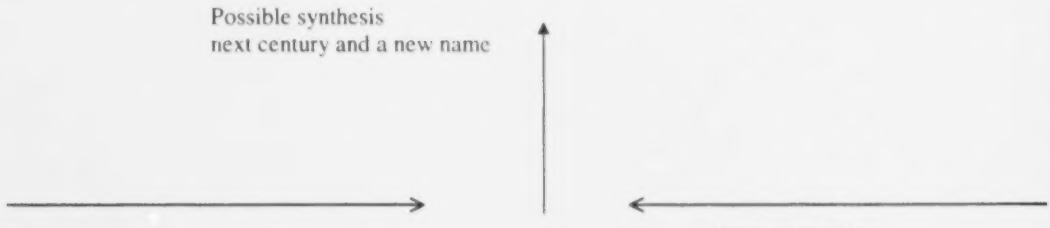
As we have **lost faith** in our modernist ideals, reality has become increasing commercialised. There is a trend towards commercial privatisation - of water, schools, hospitals, support for the arts, etc.

Not known if there will be a reaction against this trend towards the commercialisation of reality, early next century.

The After Postmodernism Debate

It is important to see postmodernism as continually transforming itself in response to continuous challenge. This is now called the '**after postmodernism debate**'.

Postmodernism is not going unchallenged:



1) It is now under fierce attack from modernists. See as an example: The Killing of History (1994) by Keith Windschuttle. A great debate is waging between modernists and postmodernists.

2) It is completely rejected by conservatives. See as an example: Allan Bloom (1987) **The Closing of the American Mind**. Perhaps its strongest opposition comes from the world of Islam. See Bryan Turner (1994) **Orientalism Postmodernism and Globalism**. Side by side with the rise of postmodernism is the rise of fundamentalism: fundamentalist religions, fundamentalist economics.

3) There is even fiercer debate among postmodernists themselves. Almost all seem critical of one another.

The leading German philosopher Jurgen Habermas (1929-) in what he calls **Critical Theory** is trying to work out a synthesis between some elements of modernism and postmodernism. He especially wants to keep alive the key modernist idea of **emancipation**.

What eventuates in the end is anyone's guess. Postmodernism is now too firmly entrenched not to have a profound influence.

Will a new episteme (a new orthodoxy) with a positive name appear in the early decades of next century? Perhaps including elements of modernism and postmodernism? My guess is that it will be more flexible and multivariable than modernism.

Possible Implications For Adult Literacy

Over to you as the experts in the field.

Examples:

- In an increasingly visual world literacy may become much less important.
- The internet may develop its own kind of literacy quite separate from educational institutions.
- People may read only in small grabs, extended reading may almost disappear.
- In an increasingly relativist world there may be no standards for literacy.
- The act of precise spelling may disappear - due to spell-check.
- Literacy may lose its premier position as the venue for truth, there being no Great Truths.
- Only commercial literacy will survive.
- The concept of education (which implies an autonomous learner able to accept or reject) may disappear in favour of training.
- There may be a back-lash towards traditional teaching of literacy - the conservative reaction.
- What preferable futures would you postulate in response to the above trends?

Note: Message of this address - computers (stand alone and on line) not only change delivery, they change constructions of reality.

Books On Postmodernism

Note: this is only an introductory list. Look at the recommended reading in the back of books to extend your reading in the subject.

Appignanesi, R. and Garratt, C. (1996) **Postmodernism for beginners**.
Anderson, T. (ED) (1996) **The Fontana post-Modernism reader**.
Docherty, T. (1993) **Postmodernism: a reader**.
Jameson, F. (1991) **Postmodernism or the logic of late capitalism**.
Weedon, C. (1987) **Feminist practice and poststructuralist theory**.
Norris, C. (1993) **The truth about postmodernism**.
Usher, R. and Edwards, R. (1994) **Postmodernism and education**.

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Collaboration and compliance in the workplace

Hermine Scheeres
Nicky Solomon

Discourses around 'change' dominate economic policies and practices worldwide. Changes in the nature and definitions of work and changes in the nature and definitions of education and training have given rise to new research, practices and debates in these areas. Workplaces have emerged as new, contested socio-political and educational sites focusing on changes in the relationships between work, education and training.

This paper discusses some of the issues emerging around the dominance of economic rationalist discourses on education policy, research and practice by examining commissioned workplace research and practice. The workplace as a site of academic and educational work exemplifies the tensions in the new collaborative partnerships between government, industry and education. The main focus of this paper is on the dilemmas and complexities of compliance in commissioned workplace research and practice, drawing on our participation in a specific project. This compliance raises questions about the researcher/practitioner roles, what counts as quality educational practices and what the implications are for research and new knowledge production.

Commissioned research is a site and part of the technology of workplace training reforms. Major contextual shapers of these reforms are the political and economic changes related to globalisation, economic rationalism and the accompanying dismantling of borders and boundaries (be they national, trade, or disciplinary) and foregrounding of vocational and workplace education and training as keys to competitiveness and success in the global economy.

Collaborative partnerships between government, industry and education, one example of the shifting boundaries, have been hailed by politicians as a significant cornerstone in the workplace training reforms. The collaboration of three partners is a critical part of the technology for increasing the knowledge and skills of Australia's workforce. A key component of the reforms is the systematic alignment of work, education and training where the links between educational outcomes and industry knowledge and skills (competencies) are foregrounded. These partnerships have allowed for 'collaborative' policy construction and implementation heavily supported by large amounts of commissioned research and curriculum development funding. However, such partnerships are not unproblematic.

Fuelled by the dominance of economic goals that tie together production, performativity and the master discourse of economic rationalism, workplaces are the common site of interest of all the partners. But with such partnerships a number of dilemmas surface at local levels. These dilemmas relate to the tensions around the different histories and ideological positions of the participants, who in the contemporary moment are nevertheless all located in economic rationalist discourses — an engagement that has varying degrees of resistance and compliance.

The researchers saw the research in academic terms, i.e., as a contribution to knowledge and understanding about everyday work practices in the restructured workplace in the context of changing culture of work. In terms of work organisation this different culture is exemplified in the movement towards team work, flatter hierarchies of authority, flexible job roles and responsibilities and increased training. Key questions for us include how are workers empowered in these new workplaces and in what ways are traditional hierarchies and roles still in place?

> *Or, framed within a sociocultural studies perspective, we want to determine what particular social identities workers are expected to construct and display, and what related social practices they are expected to learn, demonstrate and value. What ways of talking, listening, reading, writing, acting, interacting, believing and valuing are*

> *expected in newly organised and reconstructed workplaces, and how close or far are these from an egalitarian ideal of empowerment?* (Gee et. al. p.75).

On the other hand the funding body saw the research as a task and product-oriented activity, ie., as an identification of discrete spoken and written language competencies relevant to communicating in a range of job areas in the food industry and the development and delivery of relevant training based on this identification and description.

To what degree can these different goals and desired outcomes be reconciled? Are we seeking to reconcile the irreconcilable? Of course there are several arguments coming from different positions about this. We speak from an academic position within the discipline of education. Our intellectual interest is in understanding the new kinds of knowledge about the contemporary nature of work and the meanings of 'education' and 'training' for contemporary work. We have been involved in many commissioned research projects on workplace communication and experienced the tensions around the need to find and then offer 'simple and relevant truths' that fit within desired outcomes of government and industry economic goals. Moreover these 'truths' need to be articulated in a clear language that potentially empowers and yet can also surrender to populist rhetorics about education — such as the belief that there are simple single solutions to, for example, the literacy 'crisis', if only we could 'get our education right'.

These tensions were particularly evident in a Commonwealth Government commissioned project that we were involved in. The project had two stages: a research stage investigating the changing culture of work and new work practices in restructuring enterprises in the context of post Fordism — exemplified in the movement toward team work, flatter hierarchies, flexible job roles and responsibilities and increased training. The second stage was the development of training programs on spoken and written language competencies relevant to communicating in these 'new' workplaces.

At a surface level there was a congruence of our aims and the aims of the funding bodies. However below the surface there was an incongruity. This relates to the dynamic operating between the research process and the expected product - competency based training programs. This product is not disconnected from either the tendering processes or the research process. How could we make explicit our interest in knowledge about the social identities of worker and their social practices in 'reconstructing' workplaces given the lack of readiness of workplaces and industry bodies to engage in such complexities? How could we embed the complexities of workplace language and relationships within competency based training modules with their prescriptive boundaries and organisation requiring bounded discrete sections not touching the 'openness' of learning and knowledge about workplace communication?

It is interesting to note that one of the major concerns of the researchers in tendering for and accepting commissioned research was to ensure the integrity of our work by insisting on an extensive research phase. We did not want to be complicit in the 'quick fix' nature of much workplace project work. To a certain degree we were successful in our bid and in agreements on the range of and time for ethnographic and linguistic data collection and analysis. However, it is the questions about the research practices themselves (the relationship between data collection, data analysis) and the relationship of these to the development of the training manuals and trialing of the manuals, which have shifted our focus and interest from reporting on what we found to what is the nature of what we (government, industry and academic researchers) were doing.

Our compliance was not simply a 'simple' one. Our active role in the project was manifold. Firstly, as indicated above, we had intentionally pursued the winning of the contract with knowledge of the government agenda and secondly had we not delivered the required products, we would not have 'succeeded' — in other words the compliance was also in our interests. We were active subjects. We wanted to do it and meet the needs and goals of the limited parameters of the project. But significant tensions around collaboration and compliance, for instance, need further exploration.

Our compliance in commissioned workplace research can in part be understood in the context of economic rationalist discourse. Educators, in contemporary universities and other educational institutions, are not neutral disinterested seekers of workplace knowledge. Educational institutions, like their research sites, are workplaces. Academics in universities are not simply sociological observers of the effects of economic rationalism on contemporary workplaces and work practices. They are in

business — in this case business that involves the commodification and marketisation of education. While on the one hand they might analyse or even struggle with the colonisation of education by managerial discourse, on the other hand they too are in the marketplace. Their business needs more markets in order to be successful in the increasingly competitive global market.

Winning commissioned research contracts has its financial rewards - in the first instance in terms of enabling the employment of academic staff but also in terms of the funding formulas in higher education, where a competitive index is used to distribute research funding. In other words the previous year's research quantum influences the allocation for the following year. Furthermore academics have been involved in the construction of the workplace as a new site of 'learning' and therefore a potential recruiting ground for students. Thus our complicity in commissioned research workplace projects has its own financial rewards, illustrating the inseparability of workplace reforms, research and educational practice.

This alliance forces us to problematise two contrastive positions that are often taken about academic compliance with the government agenda. The first is the strategic optimism argument which suggests that academic strategic intervention will make a difference. This position argues that we must exploit the opening provided in the new alliance in order to intervene and thus influence the agenda and the products to less performative ends. (Luke 1995) The second contrastive position is the critique from the Left that accuses academics engaged in commissioned research of 'selling out' to the economic rationalist agenda. Resistance, it is argued, in the form of non-participation, is needed to subvert the agenda. Both of these positions however fail to acknowledge the ambiguities and complexities that pull together academics, government and industry into the same activities centred on the dominance of the economic goals.

Our compliance

What follows is a reflexive commentary on our compliance in the commissioned research project that involved an examination of the language and literacy practices of three food industry enterprises. Our commentary draws on three written products of that project: the submission, the final report and the training manuals. The analysis is not an exhaustive but a selective one which highlights areas of tension and collusion.

Submission

Predictably the submission, the text that persuades the funding body of our expertise and compliance, unproblematically buys into the agenda, by complying with the promise that improving communication skills of workers will increase productivity, that improved communication will result from the development of training programs focusing on the new communication demands. This message is reinforced by the title of one of the subsections 'how the proposed project would increase worker productivity'.

The description of the research methodology reveals further compliance with the government and industry's desired outcomes. It involved ethnographic studies of the sites as well as linguistic analysis of the collected spoken and written texts. The methodology as reflected in the submission provided a linear procedural description of tasks:

> Collection of data, involving observation and taping of team meetings, consultative committees and training programs, interviews with employees and management, observation of job performance at the operator level.

1 Collation and analysis of findings
2 Identification of oral communication competencies and strategies for relevant work contexts
3 Development of 'Train the Trainer' modules
4 Trialing and revision of modules
5 Production of modules
6 Delivery of modules in food industry enterprises around Australia.

This positivist/empiricist approach where the research emphasises 'determinacy', 'rationality', 'impersonality' and 'prediction', using the natural sciences as the model (Usher 1996: 14-5) was the perfect match for the required outcome, that is, a rational, linear description of communication skills needed for productive and efficient work and the kind of training that would lead to these outcomes.

Predictably, perhaps, the research methodology conceals the fact that one of our principle research interests was to understand the complexities around construction of workplace knowledge and practices. There was no suggestion in the methodology of the significance of local site specific factors that might challenge the production of a generic list of oral communication competencies and generic training modules for trainers. Furthermore our use of a positivist methodology reveals nothing of our own academic position on research which challenges a positivist epistemology. Our research paradigm (as practised in unaligned projects) recognises not only that the site of the research is a socio-cultural construct but also that research is itself a socio-cultural practice.

Thus the complexities of the research process itself remained invisible. We followed the accepted model of commissioned research - enter workplace, collect data, then analyse, turn into desired training packages, then do the training (and perhaps evaluation). Implicit in this model is the rejection of anything that would thwart the process and anticipated outcomes. There is also no recognition that the researchers themselves influence the nature of the data collection. Researchers are hired because of their expertise (which includes a history of involvement and knowledge and getting the job done) but it is the technical expertise that allows them to identify 'objectively' what it is to be found.

The final report

There is little evidence in the report of the complexities of the research process or product. The focus is on the linear, unproblematic process. The report reveals the way we met the aims of the project, its rationale and its achievements. We succeeded. The report reveals that we 'found' a deficit of language skills in the workforce (a consequence of the fact that most operator level employees were from a non-English speaking background in combination with the introduction of new work practices that required more communication skills), we identified what was needed, we then developed and delivered training, and implicit in this is the expectation that increased worker productivity follows.

We justify our work with the inclusion of the comments from the participants' evaluation forms collected during the trialing process. These construct and validate the 'success'.

We do however reveal some of the complexities of the introduction and implementation of new management and work practices. In outlining the findings we raise a number of issues, interestingly calling them 'tendencies'. For example:

- Meetings still **tend** to be hierarchically based if higher level management is present.

- Managers and supervisors still **tend** to dominate as they follow old and established patterns of communication. In many meetings and workplace exchanges employees habitually look to management and supervisors to control the exchange. Managers need to be aware of this if they are truly concerned with providing opportunities for employees to contribute ideas to the restructuring process.

- Generally women do not contribute equally in meetings which comprise both male and female personnel. Men **tend** to take most turns at talk and often do not acknowledge the contribution of other members and often do not allow other members to have their full say. This reflects language analysis in other areas of communication, such as casual conversation, where men play a much more dominant ro'e in the exchange of information than do women.

- Non-English speaking background employees, especially women, **tend** to be disadvantaged in larger workplace meetings.

- Some middle managers **tend** to be threatened by the development of teams in the workplace and in some instances this can lead to an undermining of efforts to form working teams.

- As employees extend their responsibilities in the workplace the parameters of those responsibilities should be made clear to them as part of their training. This is especially true where their extended responsibilities encroach on the traditional responsibilities of other groups in the workplace. For example operators now responsible for the maintenance of their machines **tend** to feel intimidated by fitters who may continue to insist that the operator is overstepping the boundaries.

- Employees **tended** to doubt the commitment of managers who remained distant from the shopfloor at a time of great change.

- Team members **tended** to be frustrated by the lack of response to their requests and suggestions which they made as part of a team. If there was no response to information sent to upper levels of management team members begin to wane in their enthusiasm for teams and the changes which they are being asked to undertake in their work.

- Lack of recognition for achievements **tended** to lead quickly to disillusionment. All employees felt that acknowledgment for a job well done gave a boost to commitment.

- Many employees **tended** to criticise team training if it was undertaken too soon or if the trainer did not relate the training directly to their workplace. One group involved in the trialing of the training for this project commented that they were tired of hearing that the change to team work would take a long time. They felt that it was much more productive and much more truthful to say that the time frame depended on the team itself.

These tendencies are significant in terms of the way they foreground the continuation of the hierarchical power relations. But interestingly there is a lack of analysis of these in the report. There is an invisible assumption that managerial problems raised by the employees have been addressed (successfully) within the body of the training manuals and that the training program will be a site for raising and addressing them. Yet many go beyond the training possibilities. Our analysis of the report revealed to us that we did not make visible the relationship between these tendencies and the content of the training program. The absence of any discussion about the difficulties around the genre of the training manuals, its discreteness and its potential impact, raises questions about our compliance through the very writing of the report. Did the dominant genre through which the final report was written (narrative realism), establish the boundaries of what could and could not be articulated? Could we have raised the dilemmas by writing the text in a different way? Could we have presented questions rather than resolutions in the context of the different histories, expectations of our partners in a text that required very particular kinds of meanings?

Training manuals

Again predictably the training manuals - the 'real' product of the project - reveal our compliance. We met the desired outcomes by producing a training program (both in content and design) that complied with the expectations of those who commissioned the report - a genre that not only provides tight boundaries around each unit of competency but also one that renders invisible the politics and power relationships of workplaces that in many ways influence the effectiveness of communication more so than discrete spoken or written language skills.

There was an enormous contrast between the ethnographic and linguistic richness of the data that we had collected and concrete outcomes that were required by the project. The problems and case studies were presented as if they are easily resolved by following a number of procedures and steps using simple, clear and 'right' language. The training manuals were presented in a way that rendered the tensions, complexities, dilemmas around both the research process and the products invisible. The problems were silenced, shutting down the potential for detailed exploration of the complexities.

The presciptive boundaries established through the contents of training manuals reveal an additional significant factor. The research process involved investigation of the social and language practices at local specific sites, yet the local knowledge about these practices was not integrated into the manuals. This absence perhaps can be explained in terms of Foucault's notion of disciplinary power exercised through the panoptic gaze (1977). The prescriptive contents of the training manuals became part of the surveillance where workers regulate their practices 'automatically' according to 'anonymous' corporate

power relations. The panoptic gaze is embodied in discursive practices which involve both the use of language, (for example in relation to 'team-work', 'empowerment' and 'self-direction') and particular kinds of activities which both shape and are shaped by training. This therefore becomes part of the technology involving the internalising of control and the imposition of 'self-discipline'.

However it is important to note here that 'trialing' of the training manuals was part of the project. This was part of the 'invisible' research phase. Training sessions are a site where workers and their subjectivities, histories and sociocultural locations are inextricably related come to the fore. It was here that some of the tensions and differences in agendas became most apparent. In our dual roles as researchers and trainers in this context we had a number of overlapping interests: we were interested in pursuing consciousness raising about the government/industry ideologies with the workers; we were interested in exploring with the workers the changing workplace as a postmodern site. Significantly though at the same time we wanted to complete the training days with 'success' stories to tell, that is, that communication skills and strategies had been recognised, understood and learnt!

In reflecting on our research practices, the differences between the experience of training sessions and what appeared as written texts in the manuals we developed and worked from in training were obvious: even though the manuals problematised communication practices in the workplace, the problems were presented as solvable in a linear, rational way - this is the genre of training manuals. The recognition that ideologies and socio-political locations underpin all the new (and old) ways of working is there, but the emphasis is on moving from this to successful ways of operating in the new culture as though the new identities are a set of skills and strategies to be learned. There is a kind of hollow reassurance that the skills and strategies have as one of their bases a valuing of (cultural) diversity.

Conclusion

A range of desires and goals will continue to exist in all collaborative workplace research whether the research is commissioned or not. As researchers and educators we need to problematise 'collaborative' research, and question the nature of collaboration and compliance given the potentially opposing interests and goals of the various partners. Workplaces have become important sites for interdisciplinary research and academics are becoming more involved in workplace research. Our involvement relates to a number of complex reasons: firstly our 'academic' interest in theorising the nature of new workplace knowledge and the construction of 'knowledge workers' (Gee et. al., 1996) and the implications of this for education and training; and secondly for commercial reasons. Universities are also workplaces and therefore also one of the sites that are part of the contestation around socio-political and educational discourses. We are implicated in and thus participants in the blurring distinctions between education and training.

We need to consider ways in which we can participate collaboratively and at the same time use research to extend understandings about the tensions and the contestations around the construction of knowledge. We need to resist surrendering to the need to find simple, accessible and immediately relevant truths and definitions of what counts as success - our challenging of these, has to be visible and needs to be an explicit part of the collaborative initiatives amongst academics, government and industry.

In reexamining this kind of collaborative research one focus might be to develop a different theoretical perspective on what arises from the interviews, observations and training sessions. So, for example instead of seeing the issues and problems of the restructuring workplace practices as disruptions which either interfere with the linear, rational progression towards enlightenment, or texts which provide case studies or scenarios with problems to be examined, discussed and solved, we could reconstruct the issues and problems as disruptions exemplifying the multiplicity of subjectivities and desires of the workers.

> *The researchers' roles as language and cultural brokers helped build trust between the researchers and people from whom they were separated by a vast cultural and social gulf. These relationships helped immeasurably as the researchers attempted to understand work activities and social positions on the shop floor. The goal was to understand workers by placing them within their historical, social, cultural and work contexts as fully as possible. (Gee et al 1996: 82).*

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What's Whiteness got to do with it? : exploring assumptions about cultural difference and everyday literacy practices

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In recent times adult literacy practitioners and researchers have promoted the idea of literacy as a social practice, a view which moves beyond simplistic understandings of literacy as a functional skill, or indeed something people don't have, to views which encourage research and teaching based on the ways in which learners (and indeed practitioners) might use literacy as part of their everyday lives. This view of literacy takes account of the cultural practices, local contexts and historical patterns shaping literacy use and in my view is an improvement on functional approaches. Nevertheless, this approach has its own assumptions which subtly shape what counts as literacy practice.

In this paper I want to talk about how Whiteness, as an example of 'cultural difference', is often ignored in analyses of everyday literacy practices. Given the admittedly contested claim that improving literacy skills improves opportunities for adult literacy learners I want to ask how literacy teaching might be influenced by the relationship between daily life, everyday literacies and the concept of Whiteness.

At this particular time in Australian history this is risky business as my own interests in the pedagogies and practices of Whiteness may well get caught up with the parallel developments currently sweeping the nation. I am referring to developments mirrored in our political system and in particular the rise of One Nation as a political party. Unlike the rhetoric employed by One Nation members and leaders I do not want to foreground the problems created by non-white people in Australia. I want to challenge the assumption that White people are not part of these problems.

Unlike some versions of multiculaturalism which implicitly suggest a harmonious working through difference, I want to suggest that difference can be a positive force for social change *only* if those of us who identify as White, acknowledge that this is a difference in itself; a difference which amasses significant amounts of privilege and must be understood and acknowledged as having differential effects depending on the context.

My work and thinking (my practice in a university) has been influenced by feminist writers and non-white women who know that celebrating diversity can be hard work for those always positioned as the diverse, the different. These writers (see for example Ang, 1995; Razack, 1993) know that working across difference doesn't result in neat solutions – rather this work constitutes an ongoing process of change in which we all have a part to play.

So in contrast to some of the positions outlined above I want to put notions of difference and diversity on the agenda because they are fraught with complexity and also because they are inescapably associated with literacy teaching. More importantly, I want to raise these issues because I rarely hear terms such as difference and diversity used in relation to those folk who identify as White.

Perspectives on literacy practice

In the early days of adult literacy teaching especially in South Australia, practitioners were encouraged to use language experience, a method that attempted to ensure that students' experiences were reflected in classroom writing. I was among those who used this approach and actively promoted it as a viable way of working with new or 'reluctant learners' as some of us called them in those days. This method produced texts that were generally relevant to students' lives, and at the same time provided an entry point for (volunteer) tutors uncertain about their capacity to teach reading. These language experience practices attempted to 'give' a legitimate literate voice to the social world inhabited by students in these early classes and this theme of 'giving voice' continues in much of the research, teaching and policy documentation of literacy work today.

In more recent times it has been common to talk of literacy as social practice, that is, literacy that is 'almost always fully integrated with, interwoven into, constituted part of, the very texture of wider practices that involve talk, interaction, values, and beliefs (Gee, 1996, 41). As James Gee has said, "You can no more cut the literacy out of the overall social practice, than you can abstract the white squares from a chess board and still have a chess board."[1]

By taking a perspective which sees literacy as a social practice, texts of different kinds – papers, maps, forms, films, even bodies – for we do 'read' bodies – serve as a 'text' or point of engagement between the word and the world.

Moreover what *critical literacy* work has shown is that this process of literacy as social practice is not a reflection of learner's experience unless networks of power are examined as part of the process. Therefore *critical social literacy* must engage with networks of power. It "makes explicit and overt the social relations of power around the text, and places squarely on the table for *learners* the issues of who is trying to do what, to whom, with and through the text" (Luke and Freebody 1993, 20 italics added). But this agenda also reflects an assumption that educators will already know what social relations of power are possible within the text and furthermore that they will be able to "see" these relations of power and act on them.

Making Whiteness visible

I have had a lot of faith in critical social literacy practice in the past, and still do, but more and more I believe that we – particularly those of us who think of ourselves as a White "we" – do not "see" or experience power relations within the same event in quite the same way as non-white people. Our histories, our schooling, our friendships, our personal and professional practices, our private spaces, do not prepare us for seeing the world through the hearts, bodies and minds of Others. In fact I think it is questionable whether it is possible to ever fully understand from the Others' perspective. This is a view of the world advanced by liberal educators which is underpinned by Western rationalism, a view that actively encourages the belief that we White people can in fact know the Other.

Today I want to shift the focus away from common understandings of diversity and difference. I want to ask how common framings of literacy as a social practice "forget" that dominant discourse in adult literacy education is deeply structured and framed by White Western understandings of textual and social practice. Yet these understandings are not always visible to those of us (White folk) who take them for granted.

I want to suggest that particular forms of Whiteness saturate the social and cultural forms of literacy we use and that this may often have an oppressive effect that those of us who are White take for granted and either ignore or simply do not notice as oppressive. It is also true to say that White practice doesn't have to be oppressive always. White educators have little control over the effects of particular practices, nevertheless this should not be a reason for us to make no effort to understand the *effects* of our Whiteness on our pedagogy.

If the same experience of literacy is lived differently by different people, on the street and in the classroom, using the terminology of literacy as a social practice is misleading if it encourages us to think that the effects of these practices are the same on all bodies.

Critical social literacies involve understanding the kind of knowledge(s) available for use but more than this these literacies also assume that we understand what is required to participate in literacy events. Many advocates of critical social literacy propose that we need to be able to draw on literate practices at the very same time as we are aware that these practices are but one means by which we can communicate. The 'critical' in critical social literacy is about knowing how knowledges are used at the same time as we make choices about whether it is strategic to contest those knowledges. Moreover in terms of thinking about Whiteness and its impact on pedagogy, the 'critical' in 'critical social literacy'

[1] When I first read this quote I was intrigued that Gee had chosen the impossibility of removing the White squares. I wondered what kind of world would be needed to posit removal of black squares as an unimaginable condition.

is about knowing when and how those of us who might identify as White, unwittingly use language to reinforce our White social privilege.

The key point I want to make today is that what I call "White" knowledge frames much of what is valued in the world, but nailing down the specificity of White knowledge is difficult, particularly where discourses of Whiteness collude with discourses of dominance, and 'the mainstream'.

I have found that moving outside (adult literacy and adult) education literature there is a wealth of writing about what constitutes the White body. Many of us who are White, and even those who would not identify as White, often think of Whiteness as skin colour, however this is only one way of representing Whiteness.

For Ruth Frankenberg (1993, 1) Whiteness is

> *A location of structural advantage of race privilege ... a set of cultural practices that are usually unmarked and unnamed.*

Patti de Rosa thinks of Whiteness as three things: *description*; 'those who are light-skinned with Western European physical features; as the *experience* (in the US) of unearned privileges: and as *ideology* representing a system of exploitation based on White supremacy" (de Rosa cited in Thompson, 1997, 357). Equally as important the authors who cite de Rosa's work note that these three categories of description, experience and ideology do not necessarily provide sharp clarity given that "White people are symbols and individuals at the same time" (357). That is, we act as individuals but we are also influenced by the long and complex history of ideas associated with our (White) cultures. Whiteness *is* complex and not readily conflated to an homogenized self, however many writers also remind us that Whites 'as a group' still receive many benefits through a range of "universalised measures of merit, hiring criteria, grading standards, predictors of success, correct grammar, appropriate behaviour, and so forth, all of which are said to be distributed as differences in individual effort, ability, or intelligence (Scheurich, 1993, 7).

A quite well known paper by Peggy McIntosh (1988) chronicles the ways in which McIntosh believes her white skin gives her privilege in everyday ways. I don't want these descriptions to seem like some shopping list though, where we can move down the aisle checking the boxes to see if we are a 'good' or 'bad' White person, because I believe Whiteness as ideology and experience must accompany whiteness as description. That is we have to understand how our Whiteness is bound up in what we think and do, and how we are formed historically, as much as who we are individually.

Peggy McIntosh provides some help here. She suggests conventional schooling

> *gave me no training in seeing myself as an oppressor ... I was taught to see myself as an individual whose moral state depended on her individual moral will (4). ...When I am told about our national heritage or about "civilisation" I am shown that people of my colour made it what it is (6). ... I can speak in public to a powerful male group without putting my race on trial.(7) ... My culture gives me little fear about ignoring the perspectives and powers of people of other races (8).*

In the Australian education settings in which I have worked over the past 20 years it has been possible for me to sit in curriculum meetings and not comment when racist or incorrect comments are made about indigenous people or people from various parts of Asia. I can choose to be quiet when white ethnicity is accepted as natural and unproblematic. I would suggest though that many educators are ready to explore these issues and focus on the White self as distinct from the Other as a strategy for understanding the ways in which we too are part of the problem when Whiteness is ignored or avoided in discussions of difference. The complex of factors making up White background is slippery. As McIntosh says:

> *White privilege has turned out to be an elusive and fugitive subject. The pressure to avoid it is great, for in facing it I must give up the myth of meritocracy. If these things are true, this is not such a free country (9) ... as my racial group was being made confident, comfortable, and oblivious, other groups were likely being made inconfident, uncomfortable, and alienated. (12)* (McIntosh 1988)

McIntosh also suggests that the notion of privilege needs to be interrogated from the point of view of the psychic loss engendered by those Whites who recognize what it is that we lose when we subscribe to oppressive and narrow conceptions of identity which favour White superiority. Many indigenous women in Australia have also spoken of this loss. Lillian Holt (1993, 7) describes the processes of formal schooling as "the check up from the neck up" – a process which usually manages to dodge talk of spirit and soul.

While McIntosh points out that White privilege takes a number of forms her list subtly reinscribes forms of privilege which only White people would count as advantage. She eventually rejects the word 'privilege' as being woefully inadequate to describe the unearned resources which many White people accumulate but fails to fully recognise that her "brutally honest" (Hurtado & Stewart, 1997, 305) list of White privileges comes from a comparison of the White self and the *lack* or deficits she implicitly reinscribes on the Other. The slippage in McIntosh's writing reminds me that those of us who identify as White and who want to explore these issues, need to persistently rethink how we might unwittingly reinscribe the White centre in our efforts to think differently about culture and diversity.

There are numerous examples of this which occur daily as social literacy practices. For example, culture is often seen as something for others; Whiteness is rarely identified explicitly with culture, but is often implicitly assumed to be the centre, that place where everything happens.

Richard Dyer suggests:

> *The absence of reference to Whiteness in the habitual speech and writing of White people in the West. ...The assumption that White people are just people ... is endemic to White culture ... [t]here is no more powerful position than that of being 'just' human. The claim to power is the claim to speak for the commonality of humanity. Raced people can't do that – they can only speak for their race. (Dyer, 1997, 2)*

Two things in fact are happening here. Dyer suggests that not only is Whiteness ubiquitous, "everywhere and nowhere", it is also non-raced. In adopting this position of a non-race White people and Whiteness frame what counts. The effects of this discourse range from generic use of the term 'we' which in effect means 'White' (Bannerji, 1991) to purportedly innocent questions (or indeed angry abuse) about one's roots. See, for example Ien Ang's work (1996) which draws on the persistent need felt by 'mainstream' people in Australia to categorise apparently non-White Anglo citizens as migrants who receive differential levels of welcome. Or in a similar vein Yee's work in Canada which draws attention to the need by Anglos to sheet home ethnic (Other) origins to some distant, foreign place; "the forces of racism that always keep [her] asking questions of identity, belonging, place and voice" (Yee, 1991, 4).

These forces were powerfully displayed on a recent television program, *Uncensored*, which screened an interview between author Toni Morrison and television journalist Jana Wendt. A section of the interview, screened on ABC 2 on 8th July 1998, went like this:

Wendt *You don't think you'll ever change and write books that incorporate white, white lives into them substantially?*

Morrison *I have done. Mmm.*

Wendt *In a substantial way?*

Morrison *You can't understand how powerfully racist that question is can you?*

Cos you would never ask a white author "When are you going to write about black people?"

Morrison goes straight to the heart of the issue of White (feminist?) practices which see Whiteness as where it's at. Wendt only reinforces this problem in her comments about the interview on a radio program, revealing further evidence of her own ability to name the incident through particular forms of literate practice. Her comments drawn from the ABC 2 television show Media Watch illustrate this:

> Wendt *I think she* [Morrison] *either, either deliberately, or ... or ... or accidentally, kind of misunderstood what I was getting at. Really my question I supposed was more based on, it was a sort of a literary question (laughter – which could be construed as a nervous laugh).*

Wendt clearly displays here her 'manipulation' of literate practice – what can be said, where, and when – as she refuses to contest Morrison's version of her racism on television but manages to disavow her own racism in another forum where she does not have to deal with Morrison's further response. The radio quote suggests it is somehow possible to separate out questions of literary criticism and racism. It parallels views that somehow literacy as social practice does not need to give attention to the underlying assumptions of Whiteness embedded in many forms of every day literacy practice.

Media debate in Australia in recent times has done little to provide a space to talk about the links between social practices and racism, except in terms of blaming or demonising the Other as the usurper of jobs and futures for (White) children. This type of media politics currently growing in response to the race debate in Australia builds a space of fear, silence, or resentment. It does little to engender a discursive field which might move debate beyond simplistic notions of a benign multicultural Australian identity.

Hurtado and Stewart (1997, 299) in fact connect these notions of loss and resentment for the Other, to the deeply discomforting, and I would suggest largely unrecognized processes, by which some of us actually do discover our Whiteness, and thus come to see that we do have colour. This awareness occurs precisely through the loss of privileges (often through loss of jobs) which are so much an assumed part of being White. This loss of privilege is deeply embedded in the precarious political economies of western states in the 1990s whereby many White people have lost the relative financial security afforded the working and middle class as a result of these unstable political economies and are faced, often for the first time, with the realization that we can no longer assume access to employment as a right. Popular political and social discourses of the times provide no way to speak into existence the complexities of these issues and therefore many people in these positions do not come to the realization that their resentment is in part due to a sense of loss of our White privilege.

What can literacy researchers and educators do?

In the early days of working through these ideas about Whiteness it was suggested to me that I needed to be careful about asking (White) practitioners, researchers and academics to challenge the privilege of their own positions when so many in this marginal field of practice – or indeed the marginal field of studies within universities – were feeling so done over by bureaucracies, so overworked, undervalued, exploited and stretched to the limit. It was suggested that I needed to be careful that my work was not used as a tool against educators, while structural reform was ignored. I understand this concern that my suggestions may be viewed as yet another way of telling teachers or researchers that their practices are the problem; teachers have got it wrong; once again individual educators must be responsible for addressing the deep and systematic wrongs in the world – and all of this is to be done while institutions manage to avoid providing the necessary resources to support the work which needs to be done to promote change in students' lives.

Yet I maintain that 'thinking through' whiteness (Frankenberg, 1993) is both a personal and political/structural issue. It is not just about being white (skinned), it is about White ideologies that have the power to discipline and regulate both white and non-white bodies to 'know' what social practices will count as legitimate literacies; it is about the very structures that make up most of the institutions (in public provision, workplaces and community settings) for which many of us work.

It has become clear to me that there is a rich heritage of adult literacy writing which borrows heavily from the field of adult learning, commonly citing 'adult learning principles' as a key source of theory to inform pedagogy. I think we have to acknowledge that much of this work erases issues of colour and diversity by using terms such as 'us' and 'them', terms which then proceed to mark implicit (White) standards for actual social practice.

I think we need to bear in mind the words of Aileen Moreton-Robinson, a Keonpul woman from Quandmooka (Moreton Bay) who reminds us

> *... most white people give little or no thought to the way that Whiteness makes its presence felt, or how stressful it can be for Indigenous women, men and children living in their country controlled by white people. ... White race privilege means white people have more lifestyle choices available to them because they are "mainstream". Belonging to the "mainstream" means white people can choose whether or not they wish to bother themselves with the opinions or concerns of Indigenous people.*
> *(Moreton-Robinson 1998, 39-40).*

What I am suggesting is a process of reading and writing against a grain which posits White as the norm; a process which makes us rethink our relationship, not only to our (white) selves but to our (White) histories as well. So what would this require us to do "in the flesh"?

First I think this requires that those of us who identify as White think of ourselves as having culture and ethnicity and that this culture may have effects not of our choosing; that is the effects are at times experienced by Others as oppressive, whether we mean them to be or not.

Given the mainstream resistance to taking adult literacy seriously in some academic, and training circles it has been understandable for some of us to talk of 'a field' and 'the field'. This has served as a useful device to promote the concept of unity and coherence across an emerging area of work which in practice maintains an uneasy alliance across many divisions – for example ESL, numeracy, indigenous programs, genre theory, whole language, critical literacy, feminist practice and so on. However, this way of speaking has erased some of the specificity of diversity within the field and I want to suggest another aspect of difference it has obscured. I want to suggest that using the term "we" to create a sense of coherence and unity, has resulted in a linguistic and social practice which assumes a white subject (practitioner, learner, bureaucrat or researcher) at the centre of much discourse and ignores the exclusions this attempt at linguistic inclusivity generates.

I think there are a number of strategies researchers and educators can adopt to move beyond this form of colour blindness (cf. Frankenberg, 1993) but most of these strategies require first and foremost that those of us who identify as White become more responsible for understanding and acknowledging the 'invisible knapsack' (McIntosh 1998, 2) of differential privilege we carry with us every day.

As Donna Haraway has noted, this is a project of learning how we have come to see (Haraway, 1991) of understanding how Western Science has been implicated in our thoughts and practices and at the same time knowing that there are other ways of naming the world. For those of us who identify as White this involves a conscious choice (Moreton-Robinson, 1997). Many of you may have heard the saying "If you are not part of the solution then maybe you are part of the problem". While I agree with the sentiments of this saying, I think the simplicity of the message is deceptive in that it suggests there is a solution. I'm not sure there is ONE solution. What I do know is that understanding the relationship between Whiteness and dominance, and unlearning my privilege, is a long journey of personal and collective change. The outcomes have not always been those that I would have wanted. Part of this journey involves recognising that I won't always have the answers, that this may leave me feeling frustrated and wronged and that this too is part of a racialised reaction that is bound up with my desire to have some level of comfortable closure around my Whiteness and its effects on my pedagogy. I don't think this kind of comfort is possible if critical social literacy practices address the problem of white privilege.

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CONFERENCE PAPERS

Interactive learning – enterprise based training into the new millennium

Fotina Babalis

Introduction

This workshop paper explores the issues and challenges of implementing training in OH & S and Workplace Communication competencies from the new Process Manufacturing training package in an enterprise in inner Melbourne. It also discusses the issues of using new learning technologies for training in this industry.

Over an 18 month period an enterprise based teacher from Northern Melbourne Institute of TAFE and the training officer from Burtons have developed and implemented a comprehensive WELL (Workplace English Language and Literacy) funded training program in the company.

This paper explores the following areas:

- Background to the current training program
- Factors contributing to the development of the training
- Contextualisation of the training package for the enterprise
- Developing training resources using new technologies
- Recording trainees' competencies against Process Manufacturing Sector competency standards

Background to the current training program

Burtons, originally a family owned business, established in 1954, was bought by Pacific Dunlop Ltd. in 1990. The major products are an extensive range of electrical cables for domestic and industrial use, quality cordsets and wiring harnesses for the automotive industry. The work force is predominantly female, with 229 employees and approximately 75% of the employees from NESB background. Twenty-two languages are spoken at Burtons with Chinese and Tagalog being the predominant languages.

The employees on the shop floor of the company had no prior training before a WELL submission secured funding for a .6 enterprise based teacher (EBT) in 1997. A language and literacy needs analysis of the company and its employees was conducted in February 1997. This identified the learning needs of the employees and the training issues in the company. As a result 139, employees received language and literacy training while senior management and key office personnel received Plain English, Workplace Communication and Cross Cultural Communication training.

Evaluations of the training revealed that although there had been many indicators to show the success of the training in 1997, there was a continuing need for language/literacy training in 1998. Consultation with the Training Officer and General Manager revealed the need to increase occupational health and safety levels in the company and to continue to improve the level of communication generally across the company. A WELL submission for a .5 EBT for 1998 was successful and six language/literacy groups are currently receiving training in O H & S and Workplace Communication training.

A national training package for the Processing Manufacturing Industry was in development and it was decided to implement training based on that package.

Factors contributing to the development of the training

In developing the training in 1998, a collaborative approach was adopted with the EBT, the coordinator of the Workplace Education Unit, the training officer and the management of the company. In the preceding year a good working partnership, based on mutual respect and a level of trust, had been built between the enterprise and us as trainers. A range of factors was considered and these factors have impacted upon the design of the training program.

Business Imperatives

The company has a number of business imperatives that needed to be considered in the development of the training program for 1998. They were :

- Improving safety in the company and reducing workplace accidents
- Reducing absenteeism
- Improving communication and participation within and across departments
- Improving team work, quality and productivity
- Reducing costs

Learning Imperatives

Other factors that were important in our thinking in designing the training were:

- The learning needs of the individual employees
- The imminent release of the process manufacturing training package
- Making the learning as accessible as possible to the trainees
- Integrating the training into the workplace
- Using the expertise, particularly in O H & S, in the company
- Contextualising the learning materials to the industry and the enterprise
- Utilizing flexible modes to spread the training as far as possible across the company

Occupational Health and Safety Imperatives

Upon obtaining a draft copy of the competency standards for the Process Manufacturing Industries, the EBT began examining the competencies to see how these standards could be applied to the enterprise, what the benefits to the enterprise would be and what the competencies meant for the trainees.

The EBT consulted the training officer, employee liaison officer, safety committee members and senior management at Burtons about the O H & S competencies. Discussion centred around understanding the competencies, the relevance of these competencies to the enterprise, the O H & S concerns of the enterprise and how the enterprise and trainees would benefit from the competencies or the O H & S training.

After the discussion, the EBT noted the key O H & S issues that were raised:

- Increasing safety awareness
- Identifying possible dangers to self and others
- Preventing accidents
- Reducing accidents and injuries
- Reducing workcover ~ costs to the enterprise

Effective training needed to be developed to achieve these O H &S goals. Existing training at the enterprise included manual handling and emergency evacuation. Resources available included existing material within the polymer processing certificate, O H & S videos, posters and information booklets, workcover videos, posters and other general information.

Developing training resources using new technologies

The EBT's experience in delivering training within the enterprise since February 1997, meant that the clientele was well known. This made the customisation and delivery of the O H & S competencies an enjoyable and rewarding task for the EBT. She began thinking of ways to make the delivery of these far more interesting than the standard generic O H & S workbooks.

It was decided to design training activities around an occupational health and safety story. The EBT wrote a very simple, and easy to read story centring around six key characters. The names of these characters were unusual: she chose key language from the enterprise, medical, and food and beverage terms as names which appealed to the enterprise and trainees. The characters and events which took place in the story needed further developing, so digital images were taken. This approach was taken to enhance authentic language and literacy learning within the enterprise.

The EBT then drew up a list of resources that would support the development of the training material:

- Sickness and Injury reports
- Company memorandums
- Notice of Injury report
- Minutes of Safety committee meeting
- Workcover claim form
- O.H& S and workcover safety videos

These resources were woven into the context of the story through a variety of exercises.

Reference was also made to the Range of Variables section in the occupational health and safety competencies of the standards, for additional ideas of resources.

Once suitable training activities were designed, the EBT looked at the elements of the competency standards. The learning activities developed were then mapped against the elements in the competency standards.

Figure (1): A competency from the draft Training Package for Processing Manufacturing

Unit:	Follow Occupational Health and Safety Procedures

Element:	Identify and follow workplace procedures for hazard identification and risk control

Performance Criteria

- **Workplace procedures for Occupational Health and Safety are identified and related work instructions for controlling risks are accurately followed.**
- **Workplace procedures for dealing with accidents, fire and emergencies are known and followed.**
- **Hazards in the workplace are identified and reported to designated personnel in accordance with workplace procedures.**

As a result of additional funding, through the print-based material, WELL resources are currently being further developed to consist of multimedia components.

These learning resources are being developed in a coherent self paced learning sequence with the learner being able to choose the use of multi media CD Rom, Internet or print versions at any time.

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The CD Rom being developed with the use of Toolbook Computer Based training software will include:

- Digital images and sound
- Video and sound
- Interactive exercises
- Assessment tasks which create logs and give immediate feedback to the students
- Links back to the use of print based material
- Links to the training WEB pages

The CD Rom will have a book-like structure and be easy to navigate. Use of the CD Rom and Internet will require the trainees to use only the mouse and not the keyboard. The use of the mouse has been further simplified by using a single click and no double clicks are used.

The development of the multimedia resource package has brought together people from across all areas of the enterprise and Northern Melbourne Institute of TAFE including the Northern Institute on line team. Everyone has brought with them their area of expertise to contribute to the development of the resource.

Trialing of the print-based resource has commenced in the enterprise. Each trainee has been given a copy of the print based material and all training groups are currently working through the material with teacher support. One trainee is working on the self paced material. As the project is still in its early stages, the trainees input and contributions will be used to further develop the resource material. Additional trials in other workplaces will begin shortly.

The enterprise has made a computer available for the trainees' use in the training room. Another computer will also be available soon with CD Rom and Internet connection, which will assist in the flexibility of delivery. Already trainees have been given a 'hands on' approach with the use of the Internet.

The EBT and the training officer at Burtons designed a task that required the trainees to look up the Burtons website at www.burtons.com.au and put in an order for domestic cable. The feedback given by the sales team indicated the order was successful. The trainees did not feel threatened using the internet and they went home telling their families about their experience of surfing the net.

The development of the resource has been met with excitement. The workplace in general is buzzing. The trainees have grasped the opportunity to be part of the project with sheer enthusiasm. Other workers would love the chance to become involved too. There is also a high level of interest from the management and office personnel at Burtons. This was especially so after the EBT wrote an article in the enterprise's newsletter. Since then many more people have been curious about the development of the project.

Recording trainees' competencies against Process Manufacturing Industry competency standards

The EBT developed a learner's passport, which would be used as a tool to record learner's achievements against the competencies from the draft training package.

Figure (2): Extracts from Learner Passport from Burtons

Unit:	Follow Occupational Health and Safety Procedures

Element:	Identify and follow workplace procedures for hazard identification and risk control

Performance Criteria	Achieved/Signed: Date
• Workplace procedures for Occupational Health and Safety are identified and related work instructions for controlling risks are accurately followed.	.....
• Workplace procedures for dealing with accidents, fire and emergencies are known and followed.	.....
• Hazards in the workplace are identified and reported to designated personnel in accordance with workplace procedures.	.....

Trainees using the passport can clearly identify the knowledge gained and be proud of their achievement against the competencies. This method of recording can also be used as a tool of communication between supervisors, company assessors and the EBT. It is further assisting in integrating the training into workplace practices.

At Burtons the learner passport was well received by senior management. It raises an awareness of O H & S and the checklist in the passport is a visible record of employees having satisfied the competencies. There has been a noted increase in O H & S awareness over the period and a decrease in workplace injuries which in part can be attributed to the success of the training.

Conclusion

Implementation of training at Burtons using the new training package has been energizing. It has provided the opportunity to creatively work with the enterprise to develop and trial learning resources and initiatives from a new training perspective. The development of the learner passport and use of new learning technologies are two of those initiatives.

New technologies have found their home at Burtons. They provide a flexible approach to training for the enterprise and trainees. Training can be delivered at the trainees' own pace, individually, in training groups with teacher support, print-based, on CD Rom or on the Internet. Language and literacy learning within the workplace is far more interesting, accessible and authentic with the content crafted to fit the unique needs of the enterprise.

Although the project has not finished, feedback from the enterprise suggests that the training has been successful with a greater awareness of O H & S on the factory floor. The employees are identifying hazards, identifying risks and being far more aware of their environment.

The partnership between the enterprise and Northern Melbourne Institute of TAFE is a fruitful one. Both organisations have benefited enormously from it and an example of this has been the development of the resource project. The EBT's involvement with the enterprise, and the support of the enterprise, have greatly contributed to development of the resource.

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Digging deeper: a strategy for text analysis with indigenous students

Patricia Beattie

Introduction

Batchelor College is a multi-purpose tertiary institution with campuses in Batchelor, Katherine, Tennant, and Alice Springs, whose primary client group is Aboriginal students, many mature age, from mostly rural areas of NT, but increasingly from urban contexts and from interstate.

The College seeks to support the self determining aspirations of Aboriginal people and offers courses, both TAFE and Higher Education, in general education, in teacher training; health worker training; and in aspects of community development-office work; technical skills; land management, interpreter/translation etc from pre-tertiary to post-graduate degree level.

Currently the student population numbers 1560 and the College has over 100 academic staff. Programs are conducted largely off-campus -intensive 1- 2 week workshops either at Batchelor or a community convenient to students, augmented by pre and post-workshop tasks carried out with the assistance of Lecturer As and part-time DEET tutors in the field.

Many students have come from workplace situations in the community for more education and training to enable them to become qualified, but although enrolled in a tertiary institution, most students have had little or no secondary education. For students from rural communities English is a foreign language, that is, the language of home and of business in the community is generally not English. For others who use Kriol or Aboriginal English, standard Australian English is a second dialect. For the vast majority, even those from more urban contexts, reading and writing are neither familiar nor comfortable practices.

The majority of the lecturing staff are not language specialists so, while they are aware of student's difficulties with literacy, they are often unable to articulate just what these difficulties are, or to develop strategies to address them, especially since there is little or no time after 'getting through content' for extra literacy work. So literacy teaching strategies have to be such that they can be done 'on the run'.

I will briefly summarise my research and then describe the text analysis strategy I now use and recommend to others.

Background to the research

First some background. From 1984-1994 I was involved as a curriculum writer in Homeland Centre education in the Northern Territory. Homeland Centre communities are tiny communities formed when families return to live on country with which they have a traditional affiliation. This phenomenon, which occurred across Australia in the late 60's and early 70's, became known as the Outstation Movement. In the Northern Territory, if the community is large enough and desires schooling, a member of the community is selected to be the teacher and deliver the Department of Education program for Homeland Centre 'schools', School of the Bush. Many of these 'teachers' also enrolled in part-time teacher education programs through Batchelor College.

During that time I became aware that homeland centre teachers, though multilingual, experienced considerable difficulty with English and especially with written text. However I could not have articulated precisely what these difficulties were. Some were obviously technical - difficulties with decoding; some were the result of lack of practice; some I could imagine were socio-cultural, stemming from the fact that English is the language of colonisers and a very real threat to the survival of their own language. I also suspected that much of it was cultural in orientation and related in some vague

way in my mind to the Whorfian hypothesis that each language imposes upon its speakers a particular view of the world. I decided that I needed to know more about my own language.

The questions which framed my research became: What are the difficulties indigenous adult students from non-urban contexts experience with English text? What are other educators doing to address this? How can these students' English literacy development best be supported? The title I eventually settled on was: *Digging deeper: text analysis as a strategy in the teaching of English literacy to adult, non-urban Aboriginal students in NT.*

'Digging deeper' alluded to a statement by some Yolngu (NE Arnhem Aboriginal educators)

> *In the cross-cultural education context the implication for educators from both Yolngu and Balanda traditions is that they must be prepared to 'dig deep' into their own cultural knowledge and share it (Wunungmurra et al., 1988). However it is recognised that this is not an easy process and demands a particular kind of educator. 'It is only self-aware, cross-cultural teachers who could conceivably engage in this active, self-researching teaching in a truly Yolngu school' (Marika et al., 1989, p. 10).*

This had dual significance for me: I myself was digging deep into my own language and culture in this research process and the eventual strategy I hoped to developed would be an attempt to dig much deeper than before into text with students.

It was 'a' strategy, but not, I realised, the only one needed to address student aspirations. 'Non-urban' meant Homeland Centres and also larger rural communities. The 'text analysis' of the title is to be understood as a shared activity - done by teacher and students together

I decided on a questionnaire as the most appropriate way to begin the search. My survey group were educators in all institutions in the NT delivering programs to adult indigenous students in non-urban communities.

The survey group

Who were these institutions and what were the courses in which students were enrolled?

The institutions	The courses
Batchelor College	
School of Education Studies	Associate Diploma of Teaching Stages 1, 2 and 3 Diploma of Teaching
School of Health Studies	Associate Diploma of Education (Adult) Enabling Course in Health Science Certificate in Health Studies Associate Diploma in Health Science
School of Community Studies	Certificate in Office Administration Associate Diploma of Business
Centre for Australian Language Learning	English/Language contact
Northern Territory Open College (NTOC)	Certificate in Access to Education and Employment (ACCESS)
Nungalinya College	Certificate in Theology Diploma in Theology Certificate in Bicultural Life Studies
Centre for Aboriginal and Islander Studies (CAIS), Northern Territory University	Certificate in General Studies

Who were the educators?

Teaching background	No of educators
Secondary/Tertiary/TAFE	26
Some experience in Primary	24
No training at all	2

Gender	No of educators
Female	33
Male	19

ESL/Adult literacy qualifications	No of educators
ESL Qualifications	12
Some ESL units	6
Adult Literacy	8
Some units in adult literacy	4

Number of years in Aboriginal education	Number of respondents
20+	5
15-19	6
10-14	5
6-9	11
4-5	8
1-3	13
Less than 1 year	4
	Total 52

As you will see from these tables 52 educators responded; a variety of courses is represented in the study; about half the respondents came from an adult education background, the other half had primary experience; a minority had ESL training; as a group, the respondents were largely experienced in working with indigenous students.

The questionnaire

The questionnaire itself was designed to ascertain: educators' perceptions of students' motivation to learn English and English literacy; the methods they use to assess their degree of success; the language/literacy teaching strategies they had found successful/unsuccessful; the difficulties they perceived students would have in reading a short passage; and any teaching strategies they had developed to deal with these.

The passage selected was from a local NT newspaper.

JAWOYN PLAN MOVE INTO TOURIST TRADE

Territory Aborigines are going into business in a big way and look set to become some of the NT economy's main players.

The Jawoyn Association last night announced plans to enter the tourism industry at Katherine in a joint venture with Travel North.

From May 1993 the Jawoyn will hold a 50 per cent stake with Travel North in the camping ground and boat tours in Nitmiluk (Katherine Gorge) National Park.

As a result the association will buy out the boat tours currently operated by the Queensland-based Australia Frontier Holidays.

This news comes in the wake of a recent announcement that a central Australian Aboriginal group has entered into a joint venture with Toyota car dealership at Alice Springs and Tennant Creek Mitsubishi.

An announcement is also expected at any time that the Jawoyn have entered into a huge joint partnership with a major Territory company to build the Mt Todd Zappopan mine facilities.

NT News, P2 (slightly adapted), Wednesday 28th April, 1993.

The findings

How did lecturers construct themselves as language and literacy teaching strategists?

Although the strategies listed by respondents demonstrated the use of good adult, cross-cultural education practices, they also revealed a limited repertoire of strategies for addressing students' English language and literacy difficulties. Moreover, when asked for details of strategies they used to deal with the difficulties students might encounter with the text provided, almost 50% failed to complete the item.

How did educators construct themselves as text analysts?

Only a few educators were able to be specific about some of the difficulties students might have with the Jawoyn text. Others circled potential difficulties but were unable to articulate exactly why it would be difficult. In terms of critiquing the positioning in the text, educators themselves were either uncritical or suspicious but uninformed, unable to pinpoint reasons for their unease. They also seemed to have little metalanguage with which to discuss the text.

The difficulties inherent for students in the text, as identified by educators, fell into the following categories (as summarised by me):

- the conceptually dense nature of the passage
- insufficient knowledge of the context of the passage
- unfamiliar usage of familiar English words
- the presence of foreign concepts in the text
- the figurative use of language in the text
- difficulties with the time frame of the text
- failure to use the cohesive cues supplied by the author
- insufficient knowledge of genre
- inability to identify how the reader is being positioned by the text.

Other causes of difficulty mentioned by individual educators were: the irrelevance of print literacy in students lives; insufficient vocabulary knowledge; unwillingness on the part of students to reveal a lack of knowledge; the irrelevance of reading as an activity; insufficient knowledge on the part of students to be able to ask for help; no systematic approach to assist students make meaning from a piece of written text; the gulf between the spoken and written modes of English.

How did educators construct their students as learners?

They constructed them as:

- clearly stating their needs/wishes for English/literacy teaching over and over again
- pragmatic, their goal being job-related English
- 'frustrated', 'restricted', 'downhearted' with their lack of success (or possibly the failure of their efforts to get more teaching?)
- 'knowing where it's at' (in responding with alacrity to learning and using computer technology)
- clearly rejecting activities which they perceive as meaningless or 'boring'
- actively resisting being singled out in class as individuals and reluctant to contribute in large groups
- extremely sensitive to being shamed in any way;
- having 'huge gaps' in their schooling
- having limited knowledge of the world outside their community, which forms the context for most English texts.

Conclusions

I had found out what I had suspected, that my peers, like me, were operating as best they could, but without having a theoretically grounded and systematic approach to literacy development. It also seemed to me that I myself had learned to write, for example, by reading, and yet students did not seem to be doing much reading. In fact it was stated specifically in one institution's curriculum that it was not a 'readings-based' course. While I could sympathise with the reasons for arriving at this situation: a lack of indigenous authored materials; the hegemony of English; student difficulties with reading etc; I also suspected a degree of avoidance-teachers were unwilling to engage in a practice students found uncomfortable. And so students' English literacy difficulties went largely unresolved.

It seemed to me we needed an approach which would address students' stated requests for greater development of their English reading and writing skills, would reduce their discomfort and would accommodate their preferred learning styles and contexts.

Theories which helped

I began to read in the area of text and reading and will summarise briefly the key ideas which proved most useful.

From Halliday's (1985) Systemic Functional Linguistic grammar and Jim Martin's notion of 'thingification' (1992) I took the idea of text as rhetoric and the writer as 'persuader'; cohesion as the 'glue' which holds text together; and grammatical metaphor (nominalisation).

Proposition Theory comes from a more philosophical approach to language. Teun van Dijk and Walter Kintsch reminded me that a major activity of human beings is to name the world around them and that all our languages are peppered with references to people, things, events, ideas, directions, places, times etc. Within a text there are macro ideas (or propositions) expressed in the title, headings etc., and micro ideas, expressed in words, phrases.

M. Reddy (1989), R. Lakoff & R. Johnson (1980) illustrated very well to me the ubiquity of metaphor in our everyday language. It became clear to me how writers constantly use imagery to take their reader beyond the two dimensional limitations of words on a page. Of course, these images then frame the reader's understanding in particular ways.

Critical literacy theorists like Alan Luke (1993), Brian Street (1987), Gunther Kress (1985) demonstrated to me that each text is simply a particular construction of reality - the writer's.

Lastly, I was struck by the power of Foucault's theory of Discourses, i.e., particular Conversations that crisscross societies, especially as it is interpreted by people like James Gee (1993) and Gunther Kress - that each text is the site of many Discourses and that any text can be 'excavated' to reveal its cultural, historical, socio-political origins.

It seemed to me that drawing these various perspectives together could provide me with a range of ways in which to approach a text; a way of digging deeper and deeper into it; a way of exploiting its resources to the fullest.

As you will see I am not so much talking of *literary* analysis as much as an analysis which reveals a multitude of things about writing/reading in English. Shared reading, for me, would involve: looking at the cohesive elements in the text (connectives; reference; ellipsis; deixis); identifying concepts; the names of people, things, actions, locations, temporal references, abstract ideas; looking for agency (active and passive voice) and cause and effect relationships; identifying metaphor or metaphorical fragments; looking for words which evoke emotions or associations of some kind, whether historical or socio-political, to establish the presence of Discourses.

Let's look at a text which I have used recently with first year students in a unit on English. This text, taken from the South African, *Critical Language Awareness* series (1993), edited by Hilary Janks, and a contrasting text by Yami Lester, an Aboriginal Australian, documenting his early experiences with English, were selected to prompt students to consider their own attitude to learning English and what had shaped it.

YOU WITHOUT YOUR LANGUAGES

I was born into a large peasant family: four wives and about twenty-eight children. I also belonged, as we all did in these days, to a wider extended family and to the community as a whole.

We spoke Gikuyu in and outside the home. I can vividly recall those evenings of storytelling around the fireside. It was mostly the grown-ups telling the children but everybody was interested and involved. We children would re-tell the stories the following day to other children who worked in the fields picking the flowers, tea-leaves or coffee beans of our European and African landlords ...

The home and the field were then our pre-primary school but what was important, for this discussion, is that the language of our evening teach-ins, the language of our immediate and wider community, and the language of our work in the fields were one.

And then I went to school ... For my first four years of school there was still harmony between the language of my formal education and that of the Limuru peasant community. The language of my education was still Gikuyu. The very first time I was ever given an ovation for my writing was over a composition in Gikuyu.

It was after the declaration of the state of emergency over Kenya in 1952 that all the schools ... were taken over by the colonial regime... The language of my education was no longer the language of my culture ... English became the language of my formal education. In Kenya English became more than a language: it was the language, and all the others had to bow before it in deference.

Thus one of the most humiliating experiences was to be caught speaking Gikuyu in the vicinity of the school. The culprit was given corporal punishment-three to five strokes of the cane on the bare buttocks-or was made to carry a metal plate around the neck with inscriptions such as I AM STUPID or I AM A DONKEY. Sometimes the culprits were fined money they could hardly afford.

The attitude to English was the opposite; any achievement on spoken or written English was highly rewarded: prizes, prestige, applause, the ticket to higher realms. English became the measure of intelligence and ability in the arts, the sciences and all the other branches of learning. English became the main determinant of a child's progress up the ladder of formal education ...

The language was taking us further and further from ourselves to other selves, from our world to other worlds. What was the colonial system doing to us Kenyan

children? What were the consequences of, on the one hand, this systematic suppression of our languages and the literature they carried, and on the other hand the elevation of English and the literature it carried?

Slightly adapted from Ngugi wa Thiong'o Decolonising the mind: the politics of language in African literature

Workshop note

My own version of the text, annotated in preparation for reading it with students, is included as an appendix to this paper. As you will see I have highlighted all the elements of the text I want to exploit as we read. Paramount in the process however, is maintaining the flow of meaning and enjoyment, so teaching points are kept brief and incidental to the main task.

Shared reading procedure

After the first reading of a paragraph, (usually taken in turns round the group) I read each sentence again then and initially ask questions that can be answered directly from the text e.g., What does the writer tell us about himself in this paragraph? Can you find a word that means ...? What little word tells us that ...? (Little words are often ignored or slid over by students) Who is 'they'? 'it' 'this'? And to help with an unfamiliar vocabulary item, 'Can you find a little word you know inside this larger word?' Concentrating initially on surface features in this way is to give students confidence, but also to insist they focus on the evidence within the text itself.

Concept words crucial to the meaning of the passage are treated in depth, but unfamiliar vocabulary items which students are not likely to need to know ever again are explained briefly, in passing, to maintain the flow of comprehension.
Then, reading between the lines: 'Which words tell us the writer felt positive about his own language?' 'Are things still the same?' And moving towards a more critical orientation, "The writer 'was given an ovation'. By whom?" "The culprit 'was given corporal punishment'. By whom?" 'How does the writer portray .....? What words tell us?'

In an attempt to identify a particular Discourse I might ask questions like 'Who uses this kind of language? Where have you heard this way of talking before?

It is important to remember that this is an activity which is designed to be revisited regularly over time with different texts. Students will gradually become more familiar and comfortable with it and prepared to take a more active role.

The Ngugi wa Thiongo text

Let's look at the teaching points which could be made in this particular text.

Certain basic metalanguistic items will emerge as the text is discussed: 'title', 'author', 'writer', 'reader', 'passage', 'text', 'paragraph', 'sentence', 'line', 'capital letters', 'full stops, commas', 'italics', 'punctuation', 'question'.

In terms of ideology, some of the key terms and concepts are: 'peasant', 'harmony (disharmony)', 'landlords', 'colonial', 'regime', 'formal (informal) education ', 'state of emergency', 'system', 'suppression', 'elevation'. Other words (or phrases) which cue the reader in to the time and place of the events in this text are: 'in those days'; 'the following day'; 'in 1952'; 'in the fields'; 'immediate community'; 'vicinity of the school'

This particular text is rich in metaphor and imagery: 'branches of learning', 'the ladder of formal education', 'on the one hand...', 'bow before it in deference', 'ticket to higher realms', 'literature they [languages] carried'.

The cohesive elements of this text are fairly simple and straightforward. The words the writer uses to connect ideas are 'and', 'also', 'as', 'Thus', 'it'. There are two instances of ellipsis, i.e., places where the

reader must supply an idea in order to complete meaning: in paragraph 3, 'one [language]'; and in paragraph 4 'that [ ] of the Limuru community'

The reference items in this text, i.e., words which cue the reader in to making connections with participants already referred to within the text, are also simple and straightforward: 'our'; 'us'; 'my'; 'they'; 'ourselves'.

It is when we examine the writer's construction of reality and the Discourses he draws upon that the text reveals its complexity and we gauge the writer's positioning more accurately.

Quote	Discourse instantiated
'I was born'; I also belonged...; We spoke...;	Autobiographical Discourse;
'You without your languages!'; 'for this discussion'; 'What was the colonial system doing?'; 'What were the consequences...?'	Discourse of dialoguing (from oral tradition?)
'interested', 'involved', 'vividly' 'oneness', 'harmony'	Discourse of Emotional Satisfaction
'bow in deference', 'colonial regime', 'colonial system'	Discourse of Imperialism
'humiliating experience', 'culprit', 'corporal punishment', 'stupid', 'suppression'	Discourse of Oppression
'achievement', 'reward', 'prizes', 'applause', 'measure of intelligence and ability'; 'elevation'	Discourse of Prestige (Irony)
'other selves', 'other worlds'	Discourse of Alienation
'You without your languages'	Discourse of Language Loss
'The colonial regime' 'The language' (No individuals are singled out as agents of oppression)	Discourse of Politeness? Indirectness?

Some Discourses are straightforward, like the Discourse of Autobiography. Others are perhaps cultural, like the Discourse of Dialoguing and the Discourse of Indirectness/Politeness. Apart from the Discourse of Emotional Satisfaction when talking about his childhood in the first part of the text, the remaining Discourses reveal the writer's anger, grief, deep sense of injustice and oppression and feelings of alienation, but also his ability to see the irony of the situation.

When, finally, we consider the text as a construct of reality, we have to ask 'what kind of picture does the writer give us, for example, of his subjects through the words that he uses?

The writer constructs himself as	**Evidence from the text**
• gifted in his home language	'ovation'
• enjoying a harmonious childhood	'involved' 'harmony' etc
• oppressed by [British] colonial regime	'taken over', 'suppression'
• experiencing English as a dominating force	'the language', 'bow before it'
• seeing cultural practices change as a result of the colonial regime	'as we all did in those days'
• seeing himself and others experience language loss	'you without your languages'
• writing for an African audience	'us Kenyan children'
The writer constructs the colonial regime as:	**Evidence from the text**
• non-consultative	'taken over'
• sadistic	'humiliating', 'cane on bare buttocks'
• imperialistic	'English the measure of intelligence and ability'
• destroyers of culture/language	'one of the most humiliating experiences was to be caught speaking Gikuyu'
The writer constructs the reader as:	**Evidence from the text**
• Kenyan	'us Kenyan children'
• involved in a dialogue	'for this discussion'
• having lost his/her language	'you without your languages'

This text, of course, was selected to encourage students firstly, to construct their own position as readers and secondly to critically reflect on their own language learning experiences. The following questions were posed What does this text say to you as an Aboriginal Australian reader? Is this your experience? What is your attitude to learning English?

Individual teachers will, of course, have to work out for themselves the best process to use when reading a text with their own students. My strong recommendation is that students' attention is drawn first and foremost to surface features. Only after that, should they be asked to consider items which indicate Discourse, positionings and constructs of reality.

Conclusion

The particular linguistic theories in this study - Systemic Linguistics, Proposition Theory, Discourse Theory and Critical Literacy Theory-have been drawn together because of the possibility they offer to examine text at deeper, more culturally or ideologically oriented levels. In my experience, it does not matter what kind or level of text is being read, the same process applies. The benefits of this approach I believe to be as follows. It:

- can be practised within existing courses, using texts from the field (of whatever type)
- positions students and teacher as co-participants in a task, fostering collaborative rather than independent effort
- introduces students to field terminology, values, metaphors, other players, ways of operating and provides an opportunity for group discussion and sharing of experience
- involves students in a level of abstraction important for academic study
- is spiral in development. Readers visit and revisit the process gradually increasing their levels of understanding about text and practising the metalanguage which accompanies the activity
- provides educators with an opportunity to teach about specific features of the English language and written English in particular
- capitalises on students' attendance in class since it is often unrealistic to expect that students will have the opportunity for regular reading practice outside class
- equips students with a strategy they can eventually use independently
- is suitable for all students, but especially crucial for non-mainstream students.

I would like to end with a quote from Paulo Freire.

> *Serious reading is part of the rigor (sic) of the dialogical class ... studying really, reading seriously, critically.*
>
> *... instead of telling the students, you have to read the first chapter of this book by Hegel or this book by Gramsci I read one chapter with them in the whole time of the seminar. I read with them, without telling them I am teaching them how to read, what it means to read critically, what demands you make on yourself to read, that it's impossible to go to the next page without understanding the page you are on, that if you don't understand some words you have to go to a dictionary. If a normal dictionary does not help you, you have to go to a philosophical dictionary, a sociological dictionary, an etymological dictionary! reading a book is a kind of permanent research. I do that with students (P. Freire, 1987).*
>
> In I. Shor & P. Freire, (1987). A Pedagogy for Liberation: Dialogues on Transforming Education. New York: Begin and Harvey.

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Second language learners operate on the incomplete and inaccurate knowledge of the target language: exploratory case studies of native language interference with target language usage.

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Context

Language is a complex set of rules used in speaking, reading, writing and listening. Using language is a highly creative process. This creative quality of language is called infinite generativity (Vygotsky, 1986), referring to a finite set of rules used by the speaker, listener and writer to generate an infinite number of meaningful sentences. Although we often talk to other people about what is going on in our immediate environment, language also allows us to communicate information about another time and place. This characteristic of language is called displacement (Vygotsky, 1986 and Goodluck, 1991).

The focus of this paper is on one aspect of second language learning in the classroom - grammar. Several theories have been proposed to account for the learning of second language grammar. According to the behaviourists (Corder, 1967 cited in Cook, 1988 and Nemser, 1971 cited in Seliger, 1988), all learning, whether verbal or non-verbal, takes place through the underlying process of habit formation (Lado, 1964 cited in Lightbrown & Spada, 1993). Learners receive linguistic input from speakers in their environment, and positive reinforcement for their correct repetitions and imitations. As a result, habits are formed and it is then assumed that a person learning a second language starts off with the habits associated with the first language. These habits interfere with those needed for second language speech, and new habits are formed. For the behaviourist, errors are seen as first language habits interfering with the acquisition of second language habits. This psychological learning theory has been linked to the contrastive analysis hypothesis (CAH) which predicts that where there are similarities between the two languages, the learner will acquire target language structures with ease; where there are differences, the learner will have difficulty (Beebe, 1988; Cook, 1988 and Seliger, 1988).

Cognitive theorists argue that the influence of the learner's first language on the second language is not simply a matter of transfer of habits, but a much more subtle and complex process of identifying points of similarity, weighing the evidence in support of some particular feature, and even reflecting (though not necessarily consciously) about whether a certain feature seems to 'belong' in the structure of the target language (Cook, 1996). This innatist view was proposed by Chomsky (1957) cited in Cook (1988). Chomsky's theory was based on how children learn the first language. He suggested that children's minds are not blank slates to be filled merely by imitating language they hear in the environment. Instead he claims that children are born with a special ability to discover for themselves the underlying rules of a language system. He refers to the child's innate endowment as Universal Grammar and suggests that if children are equipped with it, then what they have to learn is the ways in which their own language makes use of these principles and the variations of those principles which may exist in the particular language they are learning.

Cognitive theory is not able to predict what kinds of structures will be automatised through practice and what will be restructured. This theory is also not able to predict which first language structures will be transferred and which will not (McLaughlin, 1987 and Lightbrown & Spada, 1993). How does one know, given a set of utterances by a second language learner, whether we are dealing with rules permanently fixed in the grammar of the learner like the stabilised rules in the grammar of a native speaker? Instead, cognitive theorists (Slobin, 1973; Anderson, 1976; and Marastos & Chalkey, 1983 cited in Shaffer, 1985) argue that language derives less from specifically linguistic abilities than from more general cognitive abilities. The claim is that a child's (or an early second language learner) growing intelligence and the desire to express meanings, together with language input from the parents (or teacher), are what drives the acquisition of language. The focus is on the semantic and pragmatic levels of language, as opposed to the syntactic, morphological or phonological levels. Linguistic categories such as "noun" and "verb" are not important at this stage of the learning process. The child

(or the early second language learner) is concerned with how combining known words can convey meanings and syntactic rules and categories are not yet important. Rules that are purely syntactic in nature, such as rules for noun gender which exist in some languages, are mastered later in the language acquisition process.

Krashen (1982) developed an overall theory of second language acquisition, the creative construction hypothesis, in which learners are thought to 'construct' internal representations of the target language, which in turn are thought to develop in predictable stages in the direction of the full second language system. He asserts that there are two ways for adults to learn a second language: they may 'acquire' it as they engage in meaningful interactions or they may 'learn' it via a conscious process of study and attention to form and error correction, most typically in formal language classrooms (Oller, 1971).

The second language interactionist view is concerned with the modified input that learners are exposed to and the way in which native speakers interact in conversations with learners. Proponents of this view such as Larson-Freeman and Long (1991) are concerned with the question of how input is made comprehensible and accurate by teachers. They see interactional modifications which take place in conversations between native speakers and non-native speakers as the necessary mechanism for this to take place (Harding & Riley, 1986 and Appel & Musyken, 1987).

In second language learning, the learner's goal is mastery of the target language. The learner begins his/her task of learning a second language from point zero (or close to it) and, through the steady accumulation of the mastered entities of the target language (e.g. sounds, morphemes, vocabulary, grammatical constructions, discourse units, etc.), eventually amasses them in quantities sufficient to constitute a particular level of proficiency (Dulay, Burt & Krashen, 1982; Ellis, 1984 and Cook, 1988).

This characterisation of language learning entails the successful mastery of steadily accumulating structural entities which lead to effective communication in the target language (Rutherford, 1987). If this is the case, then we would expect that well-formed accurate and complete target language structures would, one after another, emerge on the learner's path towards eventual mastery of the language. And if the learner went on to master the language, we could in principle tabulate the expansion of his/her repertoire up to the point where all of the well-formed structures of the target language had been accounted for (Beardsmore, 1982 and Hoffman, 1991). Widdowson (1978) suggests that in acquiring a second language, learners should not only learn how to compose and comprehend correct sentences, but they should also learn how to use sentences appropriately to achieve a communicative purpose, whether it is oral or written.

In reality this is not the case. This then raises a critical question - what kinds of language do second language learners produce in speaking and writing? When writing or speaking the target language, second language learners tend to rely on their native language structures to produce a response. If the structures of the two languages are distinctly different, then one could expect a relatively high frequency of errors to occur in the target language, thus indicating an interference of the native language on the target language.

This paper will make a preliminary examination of the issues in relation to native language (L1) interference with target language (L2) usage in the classroom and what its effects are on the syntactic structures of the second language learner's writing. The research scope of this paper is limited to the analysis of writing samples of a group of four adult second language learners in the language classroom, with a specific focus on syntactic structures. The writing analysis will disregard errors made in semantics and spelling and will identify whether the grammatical structures of the native language are used in the target language. The focus will also be on the types of interference of the native language on the target language and the effect of the differences between the structures of L1 and L2 on the target language. Interference of the learner's L1 on L2 is expected to occur as a result of the errors found in the L2 written text.

Previous Research and the Importance of this Research

Extensive research has already been done in the area of native language interference on the target language. There is considerable controversy over the definition of interference. Dulay et al (1982) define interference as the automatic transfer, due to habit, of the surface structure of the first language

onto the surface of the target language. Lott (1983: 256) defines interference as "errors in the learner's use of the foreign language that can be traced back to the mother tongue".

Ellis (1997: 51) refers to interference as 'transfer', which he says is "the influence that the learner's L1 exerts over the acquisition of an L2". He argues that transfer is governed by learners' perceptions about what is transferable and by their stage of development in L2 learning. In learning a target language, learners construct their own interim rules (Selinker, 1971 and Ellis, 1997) with the use of their L1 knowledge, but only when they believe it will help them in the learning task or when they have become sufficiently proficient in the L2 for transfer to be possible.

Carroll (1964) argues that the circumstances of learning a second language are like those of a mother tongue. Sometimes there are interferences and occasionally responses from one language system will intrude into speech in the other language. It appears that learning is most successful when the situations in which the two languages (L1 and L2) are learned, are kept as distinct as possible (Faerch and Kasper, 1983). To successfully learn L2 requires the L2 learner to often preclude the L1 structures from the L2 learning process, if the structures of the two languages are distinctly different.

It has been claimed (Macnamara & Kushnir, 1971; Krashen, 1985 and Ellis, 1997) that the second language learner has a more or less voluntary output switch, which inhibits one language while permitting the other to be produced. An automatic input switch is hypothesised, as well, which alerts or sets the language-processing system to deal with different languages which it hears or reads. This input switch must be at work in those first few confusing seconds of receiving some input.

It appears to be much more difficult for an adult to learn a second language system which is as well-learned as the first language. Typically, a person learns a second language partly in terms of the kinds of meanings already learned in the first language (Carroll, 1964; Albert & Obler, 1978; Larson-Freeman & Long, 1991 and Gibbons, 1991). Beebe (1988) suggests that in learning a second language, L2 responses are grafted on to L1 responses, and both are made to a common set of meaning responses. Other things being equal, the learner is less fluent in L2, and the kinds of expressions he/she uses in L2 bear tell-tale traces of the structure of L1.

Beardsmore (1982) suggests that many of the difficulties a second language learner has with the phonology, vocabulary and grammar of L2 are due to the interference of habits from L1. The formal elements of L1 are used within the context of L2, resulting in errors in L2 as the structures of both languages, L1 and L2 are different. Does it then mean that knowledge of the structure of a learner's L1 and an analysis of the errors in L2 would indicate the level of interference of L1 on L2? If this is the case, it would have major implications for teaching and learning practices. Ellis (1997) raises the need to distinguish between errors and mistakes and makes an important distinction between the two. He says that errors reflect gaps in the learner's knowledge; they occur because the learner does not know what is correct. Mistakes reflect occasional lapses in performance; they occur because, in a particular instance, the learner is unable to perform what he or she knows.

The relationship between the two languages must also be considered. Albert and Obler (1978) claim that people show more lexical interference on similar items. So it may follow that languages with more similar items (e.g. English and French) are more susceptible to mutual interference than languages with fewer similar features (e.g. English and Japanese). On the other hand, we might also expect more learning difficulties, and thus more likelihood of performance interference at those points in L2 which are more distant from L1 as the learner would find it difficult to learn and understand a completely new and different usage and hence the learner would resort to L1 structures for help (Selinker, 1979; Dulay et al, 1982; Blum-Kulka & Levenston, 1983; Faerch & Kasper, 1983, Bialystok, 1990 and Dordick, 1996).

Dechert (1983) suggests that the further apart the two languages are structurally, the higher the instances of errors made in L2 which bear traces of L1 structures. In both cases the interference may result from a strategy on the part of the learner which assumes or predicts equivalence, both formally and functionally, of two items or rules sharing either function or form. More advanced learning of L2 may involve a greater number of rules or marking features for distinguishing between the two languages. Pairs of languages which share features at different levels might, perhaps, induce different organisational systems in the brains of the second language learner. This then raises a pertinent question - does the L2 text have to be syntactically correct for its meaning to be understood? The

answer lies in several domains: the L2 learner's purpose in learning the target language; the learner's L2 proficiency level of the target language and the knowledge state of the learner in L1 and L2.

Research Questions

The case studies are designed to answer the following questions:

RQ1. are there differences and/or similarities between the syntactic structures of L1 and L2 in each of the cases?
RQ2. what are the instances where the syntactic structure of L1 is used in L2?
RQ3. what is the effect of the use of the L1 structure on the learner's writing in L2?
RQ4. what are the instances where the absence of a syntactic structure in L1 creates a difficulty for the learner in L2?
RQ5. what is the effect of each of the noted areas of difficulty on interpretation of meaning by a native speaker of English?
RQ6. what is the learner's knowledge of the syntactic structure of L1 which causes difficulty in L2?
RQ7. what is the learner's knowledge of the syntactic structure of L2?

Research Purpose

Given the debate on native language interference on the target language, it would be useful to find out what kinds of language these adult second language learners actually produce in a writing task in the classroom. It would also be useful to find out the extent to which each learner's native language exerts influence on the target language (English) as this would then have critical implications for language teacher. The wider the gap (differences/absence) between the structures of L1 and L2, the higher the level of interference is expected to be. This study would also concur or refute the efficacy of knowledge of the structure of a learner's L1 having implications for teaching practices in the classroom.

The purpose of the case studies is to conduct a preliminary examination of native language interference with the target language in the second language classroom. The focus of the case studies will be on the instances of L1 interference on L2 in the syntactic structures of the second language learner's writing. The study will also identify the types of L1 interference on L2 and the effect of the differences and/or similarities between the structures of L1 and L2 on the target language. The case studies will concentrate on the effect of each of the areas of difficulty identified on a native speaker's interpretation of the written text. The case studies will identify the importance of the learner's knowledge of the syntactic structures of L1 which cause difficulty in L2. Last but not least, the case studies will identify the relationships between the structures of the different languages involved, the language use and the knowledge of the learner.

Research Methodology

The case study is an appropriate methodology for this study as there is little control over the behavioural events taking place which cannot be manipulated, the focus is on a contemporary phenomenon within a real-life context, there is direct observation and systematic interviewing (Yin, 1994). The research questions posed are mainly "what" questions which are exploratory and a justifiable rationale for conducting this type of case study, as the goal is to develop a pertinent hypothesis and propositions for further inquiry.

Participants

The exploratory case studies are important for the group of learners involved. These four learners have been pre-assessed using the Australian Second Language Proficiency Ratings (ASLPR) and are at level 2 in their speaking, listening and reading skills, and 1+ in their writing skills. According to Wylie and Ingram (1995) learners at this level can write simple social correspondence; their language is creative enough to use stock phrases and complex enough to convey in a simple way, their own attitudes to familiar things; they make several mistakes but generally get their ideas across.

The four adult second language learners are a Spanish-speaking 21 year old female, a Vietnamese-speaking 39 year old female, a Cambodian-speaking 50 year old female and an Italian-speaking 65 year old male. Writing is an important aspect of L2 learning (in this instance, English) for these learners as they either have young school-aged children or grandchildren who request some help with schoolwork from time to time. The cases here represent the differences in terms of the structures of L1 and L2. The selection of the languages and the cases has been purely incidental. Some L1 structures are closer to English and some are further apart from the English language. There are also interesting similarities and differences between the structures of the native languages used by these learners.

Tasks:

- writing a story in English for a sequential set of pictures;
- writing the same story a second time, in the native language;
- writing a second story in English and the native language for another sequential set of pictures.

These tasks would provide an indication of the interference of L1 on L2 and the extent of this interference as well as the effect of the differences and/or similarities between the structures of L1 and L2 on the target language. The tasks would also indicate the knowledge state (or the absence of) of the learner in L1 and L2 and help to identify the source of the errors made. Writing two stories each in English as well as the native language would provide a broader base for the analysis of the errors made in the use of the structures of L1 and L2.

Interview

- an observation of the oral group interaction during the tasks;
- asking the learners to explain why they use specific L1 and L2 structures in individual interviews.

The interviews with the learners will be tape recorded where they will be asked to explain why and how they have used a specific L1 or L2 structure if there is an error. They will also be asked what they know about the structures of L1 and L2. The rapport within this group of learners is good and considerable oral interaction frequently takes place during a classroom task. Hence an observation of the oral group interaction during the tasks in this study would give an indication of what questions are asked within the group. It may appear that the L1 structures are used interchangeably within the group. The resulting written response of one L2 learner may reflect the structure of another L1 e.g. the structure of Italian may be used by the Spanish student if the latter found it acceptable.

Analysis Procedures

- analysing each learner's English text for errors in syntax;
- analysing each learner's native language text (with the help of language experts and texts) for errors;
- asking three L2 native speaker teachers to interpret the learners' L2 written texts.

Analysing the learners' L1 and L2 texts would indicate if there is interference of L1 on L2 and how this interference occurs. The analysis of the learners' L1 written texts will be done with the help of native language experts and texts. The analysis would also indicate if there are similarities and/or differences between the syntactic structures of L1 and L2 in each of the cases. The native speaker teachers would rate the L2 written texts for semantic and syntactic acceptability in terms of a story written for a sequential set of pictures. The analysis would also answer the pertinent question raised - does the L2 text have to be syntactically correct for its meaning to be understood for L2 learners at the assessed level of L2 proficiency?

Outcomes

The study will provide a view of the kinds of language second language learners produce in writing in the classroom. It will provide an indication of what learners actually do in the course of their writing. It

will provide evidence of native language interference with the target language and it will also identify the extent to which the learner's native language exerts influence on the target language and what the effects are on the L2 written text.

This will have implications for the teaching and learning process. An understanding of the syntactic structure of the native language and the type of errors made in the target language as well as the extent of the learner's knowledge of L1 and L2 syntactic structures, will benefit and assist the teaching and learning process by allowing an individualised learning program for each learner. The teacher will be able to predict possible future errors in the target language and may begin to attribute a cause to an error with some degrees of precision. The teacher can also build up a picture of the frequency of types of errors; thus it would be possible to find out whether, for example, L1 interference, or teaching techniques, or problems inherent in L2 are the major cause of the learner's errors. In this way it is possible to plan classes giving very specific help to the learners.

An important outcome of this study is the significance of the effect of the differences between the structures of L1 and L2 on the written text in the target language. Given the proficiency level of the learners in the study, the question asked is - is it important to have correct L2 syntactic structures for the text to be understood? The answer to this question poses a major implication in the second language classroom. If the learner is able to write a text in L2, then correct syntax need not be the focus of classroom instruction, given the existing knowledge base of the learner whose main purpose of learning L2 is to communicate information in a meaningful way. Should the learner be discouraged from using a native language dictionary in the second language classroom? Does the learner have to "think" in the target language to be able to produce a meaningful response which may not be syntactically correct but which may still be understood. This case study then paves the way for future research in other areas of second language teaching and learning.

Limitations of the Study

This case study is based on an observation of four adult second language learners and an analysis of each of their writing in the classroom. As such, the sample involved is small and there is a limited range of languages analysed - Spanish, Italian, Vietnamese and Cambodian. This being the case, no generalisations for all second language learners will be made. The value of this study is, paradoxically, its generalisability to a similar set of circumstances for the type of learners identified in the study. It is generalisable to theoretical propositions and not to populations.

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Throw them a line: tips for assisting students to survive their first semester at university.

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This paper will present the findings to date of a research project which is monitoring the transition of a group of students to tertiary education at university. The project raises questions about what lecturers expect from students and whether students have to adjust their learning habits and literacy practices to the academic demands of each course.

Change and its demands on first year university students

A students first weeks at university have survival as a top priority. For many it is the first time they are responsible for the administrative details formerly performed by their parents or school staff members. Students have to find their way around campus, and are experiencing new freedoms as peer relationships change and they participate in an adult learning environment. For many it is the first time they have had significant responsibilities for their transport and finances. Some have moved out of home and are learning to manage part time workloads, social lives and study loads. It is within this context that literacy and learning issues must be seen.

The research project observed first year students from the following courses across four schools at one university: *The Faculty of Agriculture*, in particular—Viticulture, Seafood and Aquaculture, Horticulture; *The Faculty of Health Sciences*—Pharmacy, Medical Science, Medical Lab Technician, Occupational Therapy, Human Biology, *The Faculty of Physics*—Geophysics, Multidisciplinary Science, *The Faculty of Business Studies*—Commerce.

It is difficult to separate out the aspects of university life which can threaten student's survival in higher education. This study seeks to focus on some of the literacy practices at University and in particular the student responses to these. Interviews with the students were made concerning the literacy demands of each of their subjects in regard to their capacity to cope with these, the kind of preparation they may have received from previous learning experiences (school, workplace, TAFE etc) and the degree and type of support which the university made available.

Literacy at university

During the course of obtaining a degree, it has been estimated that students will have written the equivalent of 40,000 words (Gough, 1995). The ability to write well is expected of students at university and there is the need to teach discipline-specific literacy practices as well as generic skills (Craswell, 1994, p. 41). In the United States universities require students to complete intensive writing courses prior to graduation (Latchem, Parker & Weir, 1995). From this information it might be presumed that literacy is about writing.

Literacy in this study refers to a person's ability to negotiate meaning with oral, written and visual texts and ideally to be empowered by this facility. Literacy is dynamic and to that extent it is constantly evolving as it adjusts to the situation in which it is being used. Literacy is not so much a skill to be 'gained' rather it is the ability to operate the knowledge discourses in the various modes (Lee, 1991). A person's literacy skills are constantly developing as they encounter new genres, new disciplines and new cultures. The students in this study were required to use their literacy in ways that demanded flexibility in their comprehension and production of the various discourses used in the broad disciplinary areas and the different subjects within these at university. Students are described in terms of their "literate habits" rather than "literacy skills" (Reid, 1994).

Transition and familiar content

Transition can be effected by the nature of the content. Transition seemed to be easier for the students in this study when the nature of the content was clearly right or wrong and built in an obvious way upon prior knowledge as it does, for example, in Pharmacy, Physics, Chemistry, Human Biology ... Students referred to dealing with "laws of nature" which form the "basic building blocks" and as one lecturer put it, "the basic principles have remained unchanged for fifty years or more." Becher (1989) describes the way in which knowledge is treated in these subjects as being cumulative and the relevance and implications of particular results are more implied than explicit. One *Commerce* student commented that when he was doing humanities subjects at school it was harder because *"you didn't know whether you were right or wrong because "the answers were so debatable".*

Where subjects were similar to what students had done at school it formed a foundation. Although at school, topics are chopped and changed around, University may only focus on one aspect which may not have been the student's strong part (e.g. Organic Chemistry uses only one aspect of the chemistry taught at school). However, the real difficulty, reported by students, is in the rate at which new information is being mapped onto what they already know and the level of understanding expected is greater than at school. Students doing *Physics* and some subjects in the *Health Sciences* (e.g. Biology, Chemistry) say the content is quite compressed, for example, one lecture covers what might be the equivalent of three weeks at school. Because of the rate at which information is being exposed to students there is a greater sense of urgency about keeping up and a greater concern when something is not understood. It would appear that problems related to transition are reduced for students doing subjects in the *Faculty of Physics*. Students find the course a comfortable extension of the sciences many of them had done at school. (Note there is a high proportion of school leavers doing first year *Physics* subjects).

This focus on content does however lend itself more to a "reproductive" learning style and teaching delivery, where memorisation and imitation is encouraged (Ballard and Clanchy, 1991). One student reported on the Latin terms she had to learn for Pharmaceutical Biology where the only way she could commit them to memory was by pattern repetition. What is being taught and learned is constructed as being unproblematic and "natural" in these subjects and was inclined to remain unchallenged by the students in this study until later in the semester, and even then by only one or two. One of the key findings from this study is that transition seems easier when literacy tasks expect students to operate at a surface level of meanings.

Transition seems easier for students when they are involved in literacy tasks where they need to be less critical

While literacy skill preparation may be low when students have not had to write essays nor research before coming to University, this study indicates that students may not necessarily have demanded this of them in the sciences once at University. In fact in this study, across most disciplines assignments as such, are less frequently required as a form of assessment[1] (also supported by a study at the same university by Samson and Radloff (1992). By well into the semester many students still had not had a major assignment, only tests which do not provide feedback except in marks. This can mean that the feedback students need in the early weeks on campus is often delayed, with a major assignment often being not due until well into the semester and in many cases at the end. Where the assignment is a "one-off" form of assessment students are not able to learn from lecturer feedback, thus making early identification of students at risk of dropping out of university difficult for both the lecturers and the students themselves. The insecurity of not knowing how they are going seems greatest for students doing *Commerce*. This may have to do with computer based assessment.

A major change in assessment is the move from long essay type assignments to multiple- choice format tests (done on computers in the library) as teaching resources decrease and class sizes become larger. Although these computer assessments provide instant feedback, the feedback is quantitative not

[1] Assignment in this study is taken to mean a set question or topic requiring an extended piece of writing for which a student would need to have consulted a source e.g. textbook, library references or collected or analysed some data.

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qualitative. This can cause concern as this student commented:

> *Human Biol - well I got 40 for the first test, 40%, that was pretty bad. An E-test. The thing is, with those tests you type in your answers and get your results back. The test and your results is done in 30 minutes. You get your result back straight away, and it's such a shock. I thought 'oh my god, how did that happen?' that was a real shock, and then for a week I was just thinking oh maybe uni's much too hard for me or something. I got 40* [this student was annoyed at the amount of information tested on the first assessment because it assumed so much prior knowledge] *then the next one 70, the next 85 and then 85.*

This story is quite revealing in how the computer falls short of providing any real guidance for the student's learning errors and is proactive in undermining the traditional role lecturer of a lecturer giving feedback. The design of these multiple-choice format does not lend itself to critical analysis assessment of the content and is more useful for deductive reasoning rather than inductive which enocurages students to consider multiple solutions. Even though students need to be inducted into the mode of thinking and making meaning in each discipline, this becomes increasingly less likely as subjects go over more and more to the practice of multiple-choice and short-answer forms of assessment.

In many subjects students are left to independently absorb the academic discourse through their exposure to the set textbook. These subjects treat their content in a way which presents the information as "natural" and not open to analysis or debate. There appeared to be a heavy reliance on the textbook to do the teaching rather than the lecturer/tutor. Many students across the disciplines reported having pages of the textbook placed unedited on the over head projector screen for students to read (if they were close enough to the front). This meant that for many students they did not even need to read the textbook let alone buy it. This dependency on one source was also evidenced when students explicitly asked for help during a tutorial situation and were referred to the appropriate page of the textbook rather than a personalised exploration of the student's difficulty by the lecturer or tutor. These kinds of practices place the student, as an individual learner constructing meanings, under threat.

Students frequently reported being overwhelmed by the reading load each week. However students were not being asked to selectively read even within the textbooks. In some units in *Commerce* the effort to link theory with practice throughout these textbooks makes it difficult for students to not read everything (i.e. the theory is presented and then a case study example of the theory in practice follows). By the end of the semester one or two students reported however that they realised they need only to read the parts of the textbook which related directly to the course objectives and it was unnecessary to read any more than this to pass exams. The following assignment could readily be answered by consulting the set text:

ECONOMICS (MICRO) 100

First Semester 1997

It is ridiculous to call this an industry. This rat eat rat; dog eat dog. I'll kill 'em, and I'm going to kill 'em before they kill, me. (Ray Kroc, founder of MacDonalds).

1. What is the difference between monopolistic competition and perfect competition? What type of market structure is the video rental industry?
2. Is monopolistic competition more efficient or less efficient than perfect competition?

The effect of this approach seems to reinforce a dependence on a particular view point or stance with minimal engagement with the text and was exemplified by the high proportion of lecturers and students relying on the notes that go with the lecture. Many subjects have detailed notes which students could use instead of attending lectures. This is consistent with a surface approach to learning and teaching where deep learning is not encouraged especially during the course of the lecture delivery (Biggs, 1987). Both lecturers and students are united in their perception that lectures are times for mechanical getting down of information and after need to be processed for sense and cohesion of ideas (not only because of the rate of the delivery in the timeframe but having to contend with an oral mode for the delivery of refined ideas using dense syntactical devices as well). Successful students invest a great deal of energy in trying to work out the "*party line*" of each subject in as short a time as possible. One

student described how his Accountancy lecturer provided summarised chapters of the textbook on Closed Reserve in the library *"It's there in front of you. If you've got to learn for exams, get the lecture notes, read through them, because that's all you really need for this course."* This is also the experience of students studying Physics and Horticultural Management where they *"can get away with"* not reading very widely.

University assignments less frequently require students to locate information from sources that cover a range of views (Samson & Radloff, 1992). This observation was also made by Kirkpatrick and Mulligan (1997) who noted that for the majority of subjects in *Health Science, Engineering* and *Business* courses, students did not have to read widely, nor did they need critical reading skills. Levels of comprehension being demanded of students in their assessments frequently does not expect synthesis but rather fill in the blanks or clone the syntax, especially for *Agriculture* subjects. These subjects have a list of headings which the students would need to cover in their assignment e.g. for Management 100 students need to deal with (1) Specific Environment factors e.g. suppliers, customers, competitors, pressure groups and government and (2) General Environment factors e.g. economic, political, social and technological conditions. There is little opportunity for students to question their own extratextual framing MacLachlan and Reid (1994).

There is an assumption that in Australian universities students will need to develop into analytical and relativistic thinkers (Ballard, 1995) although very few units in this study gave any evidence of encouraging this at First Year level. Concerns need to be raised about the lack of analysis that is required in the so called "prestige" courses of Pharmacy or Science where the wider social relations of the content and how it is being constructed within a firm eurocentric frame continues unchallenged.

Changes in communication tasks

It would appear that students studying *Physics* work in the main with figures and formulas. A great deal of their work is done in a laboratory settings where brief comments are recorded with little need for outside researching or the demands of essay writing. Some subjects hold their laboratory session in a computer laboratory where the students interact with simulated experiments on the computer. After receiving feedback from employers of graduates the *Faculty of Physics* decided to include more communication skills in their program. The students in this study reported a reluctance to put a great deal of effort into this subject (Communications 101) claiming that they couldn't see the point of the subject and believed they had done as much in English courses at school. Ensuring that students operated in groups was also a new initiative as a result of workplace feedback and the results of this literacy practice was more tangible for the students.

Group work is also integrated into the *Faculty of Commerce* subjects, for example, all subjects have a group assignment component. In the Management subject students rotate the role of the leader who takes the work from the other students and writes it up in the appropriate format. The lecturer encourages them to agree on a policy of a page of notes and two references from each person to be given to the leader on each occasion. This student reports on the positive experience it has been for him:

> *You're no longer studying as an individual. They put you in groups because that's what Commerce is about, you need to work in groups in the workforce. I thought that was very well thought about. The group system, they put each subject in, has worked well in each subject. Luckily for me I've been associated with a good group. It may hinder your progress if you work with a bad group. Connell*[2] *university has alternatives - you can divorce your group, you can pick another group ... Connell university have thought about groups associated with Commerce and they've done very good research, because what we're going to do in future life is involved in groups. They put us into groups because everyone is different has different ideologies, culture, learning habits, levels. If you go to learn individually, you're not going to broaden your horizon, you'll come away with a pass mark or whatever you do, but you'll come with the same perspective. But if you're involved with a group, different cultures, people, you're bound to learn something new, and that is the greatest benefit of groups, I believe. I*

[2] Pseudonym

can learn from Australians, from all cultures, which gives me a good idea how to deal with these people later in life. That's Commerce.

Although more courses are including a group component little attention is given by the lecturers to developing the oral communication skills needed for group presentations. Students learn the acceptable discourse by trial and error and are grateful when other students go before them.

Anomalies in literacy demands within courses

Students doing subjects within the *Health Science* courses can find themselves doing E-tests and laboratory (worksheet/workbook activities) requiring minimal literacy demands and yet all these students do the subject Health Science Communications which is disproportionately demanding in its literacy requirements:

> HEALTH SCIENCE COMMUNICATIONS 180
> Major Assignment
>
> **CROSS CULTURAL ISSUES AND HEALTH**
> Length: 1200-2000 words.
>
> This can be on any aspect of cross cultural issues and health. It may be in your own professional area, for example, Biomedical Science, Occupational Therapy, Nutrition, Physiotherapy, Podiatry.

All students in this study had major difficulties with this assignment which called upon them to draw together a range of information on a focus of their own choosing. None of the students I spoke to knew how to approach this assignment regardless of their capacity to do the assignment. The wording in the booklet listing the requirements is particularly complicated.

This assignment demanded a range of literacy skills that did not seem to be present in their other subjects, nor again in that subject. It represented a "one-off" for the first year course they were doing and was worth a substantial amount of marks (30%). Students were required to search out articles from the internet and journals as well as books, interrogate these texts for values messages, frame their own hypothesis on the ideas they were reading which may be culturally out of their own experience and value system and present the information in a manner which conformed to rigorous publishing criteria. There was a big emphasis on referencing which is quite new for students. A lot of students had very little to do with the library at their schools and tended to use what the teacher gave them for TEE[3] preparation. Students seemed much more comfortable looking up a book title, or locating the topic from within a book. A common complaint coming from students doing Psychology when they are given topics that are so recent is that the information can only be found in journals and they are not adept at locating information in this way.

Although the topic set for the students to research and write about in this Health Communications subject was challenging, the assessment focus was on the mechanics. This became a problem for the students during the composing process. As Lazere (1992) noted—while writers are concentrating on the mechanics their working memory is not freed up enough for developing their ideas into macro and microstructures. He also found that it prevented "autonomous critical thinking (p. 9)." Several students were defeated by the tasks and handed in a piece of work they were less than happy with.

Students reported that they were not being given any idea how to sort information and minimal input regarding the actual concept of cross culture as it might be explored in their paper, the focus had been on the surface features with no clear writing framework. During tutorials assistance was given in a generic form on internet and library searches, but students continued to flounder on the selection of their content. Lecturers, as Kirkpatrick and Mulligan (1997) also noted, did not see that developing

[3] Tertiary Entrance Examination

literacy (and numeracy) skills was part of their responsibility). Assistance by the author was given to the students in the study in the form of concept mapping their ideas and developing text structures and writing frameworks. Students also developed their skimming and scanning techniques in relation to their internet and library searches. [4]

There does not appear to be any agreement between schools and universities about whose responsibility it is to provide students with the skills they will need to function at the next step in their education. Samson (1996) reported that "Problems with elements of literacy for many students could mean that high schools have not prepared students for the literacy demands they will meet at university. As is more likely, it may mean that the literacy skills needed at university are different from those which students gained at school" (p. 12). The author believes that there are some generic strategies which are transferable to meet a range of literacy tasks. Although as in the assistance she offered the Health Science students they need to be presented in relation to the need students have at the time and not as generic activities.

For students who had been accepted at university through the mature-age entrance system in this study there was a marked difference in the preparation their institution had given them for study at university. The students who were exposed to study skills as part of their Canning or Tuart College Courses seemed more able to approach assignments that were unfamiliar once they started on campus at University. These students reported being shown concept mapping as a tool for understanding information, taking notes and writing assignments. They had also developed self-regulatory strategies and showed evidence of monitoring their comprehension during lectures and reading. They seemed to demonstrate a study regime which often enabled other commitments (e.g. family and part-time employment) to be slotted around their study schedule.

These mature-age entry students have been taught to take a critical stance in reading, to "question the authority of texts and generate and use their own idea as they construct meaning" (Spires, Huntley-Johnston and Huffman, 1993, p. 114). Huot (1990) believes that many differences in the quality of student writing can be attributed to whether the task requires abstract reasoning or personal opinion. However very few of the courses demanded this kind of literacy. Psychology on the other hand, and subjects within the *Social Sciences* did call upon the students to take a point of view.

PSYCHOLOGY
Assignment Topic

Write an essay on bystander apathy. Include in your essay: What made psychologists interested in this phenomenon; what are the various reasons for this "apathy", when do people help and not help. Support your statements with experimental and anecdotal examples.

This proved to be quite a challenge for the school leavers (most of whom were seventeen year olds) in the first semester at university. (Mind you in the recent wake of Princess Dianna's death, roadside apathy was quite a media item and students would have been advantaged if this had been a second semester assignment).

Not only are the literacy demands within assessments quite different across disciplines there are also big discrepancies in the expectations of non-contact work done by students between subjects e.g. Psychology expects 5 chapters in one subject each week, whereas in Economics and Horticulture Management one chapter of the textbook would be expected. Not only do these differences between courses effect literacy demands they also call upon a different commitment from the students to the subject, for example, the difference in time needed for a Psychology assignment which takes days over a period of weeks and an Information Systems assignment can be done in a few hours.

[4] Some students opted to meet regularly with the author for sharing and study skill development.

Anomalies across disciplines in literacy demands

Differences in discourses can exist even within disciplines, for example students doing Occupational Therapy may be doing Psychology and Statistics. These cross-cultural and cross-disciplinary differences have been explored by Becher (1989) and Taylor (1988) as early as 1976 when referring to these as "disciplinary dialects". These assignment tasks give some insight into the different literacies demanded from within the same course.

OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY

STATISTICS 121/123

This assignment requires you to analyse some data on body temperature (°F), gender and heart rate (beats per minute). The data is from a paper in the Journal of the American Medical Association.

You are expected to use Minitab (or any other statistical package) to analyse the data.

The questions that are addressed are:

1. Is the distribution of body temperature normal?
2. Is the true population mean really 98.6°F?
3. At what temperature should we consider someone's temperature to be abnormal?
4. Is there significant difference between the temperature of males and females?
5. Is there a relationship between body temperature and heart rate?

OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY

PSYCHOLOGY 113

How have our ideas of "abnormal" been affected by psychodynamic, medical, behaviouristic and humanistic perspectives? Discuss the relevance of each of these perspectives for specific "abnormalities."

Assumptions that students are computer literate

Another area which can be a potential threat to a student's survival at university is related to computer literacy. Across all courses in the study there is an assumption that students would require computer skills, and on certain computers with certain programs, in order to succeed in their subjects. For example, Information Systems within the *Faculty of Commerce* require their students to download their Course Outline from the website in the library and computer laboratories. All students in the study were unaware that they needed to save the file onto a disk and then print out at another terminal. Some students had no idea which computers in the library could offer the service at all. Both *Health Science* and *Agriculture* set a library assignment for orientation around the library and accessing information from the library computers. These subjects also require students to communicate with a "keypal" over the internet which caused great difficulty for all the students in this study. It must be wondered at how much time is spent acquainting the students with computers and how high the ratio of lecturer to students needs to be at this stage when so many students are lacking the basic skills and the technology seems to still be cumbersome. One *Physics* subject is run entirely at a computer laboratory and has a ratio of three lecturers to 18 students.

Students doing Management in *Commerce* and Horticultural Management in *Agriculture* who have ready access to a computer for assignments are advantaged because a set framework they are required to use can be put on to the computer as a template to be edited each time for the next assignment, which is fortnightly in the Agriculture instance. In fact there was a high expectation across all disciplines that students would present their work on computers and not just word processing, invariably it would require a spreadsheet layout. By the end of semester most students had regular access to a computer be it on campus or at home.

Conclusion

It would appear from this study that there are anomalies across a university campus in what literacy tasks are expected of first year students. Assessment tasks can involve students in extensive internet and library searches involving the manipulation of several aspects of literacy. On the other hand some students found they can paraphrase the lecture notes and cut and paste these into an assignment and receive satisfactory results. Changes in assessment practices where feedback comes to the student via a print out score can threaten the student who is having difficulty knowing which aspects of the course they are coping with. Students need to be inducted into the mode of thinking and making meaning in each discipline, this becomes increasingly less likely as subjects go over more and more to the practice of multiple-choice and short-answer forms of assessment. Insecurity for students is also increased in proportion to the amount of new information being mapped onto the student's existing constructs. For all students on campus being competent with computers is a vital form of literacy. Students are expected to be multiliterate knowing how to code switch within a course from subject to subject as well as across modes. All of these aspects can potentially threaten a student's survival on campus. If we genuinely care about our student's learning it will be important to step back and look at each subject we teach and evaluate its literacy load for our first year students.

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Jennie Bickmore-Brand

Computer use in adult literacy in South Australia

Lyn Bray

Introduction

In an era of increasing dependence on electronically-based communication, "computer literacy" is becoming an essential component of general literacy skills. Adult Literacy programs in South Australia have responded to the new dimension of literacy in varying ways; the extent of use of computers in these programs has been influenced greatly by issues of access to computers and professional development of staff.

In 1997 the South Australian Council for Adult Literacy (SACAL) proposed a research project to investigate "the impact of computer technology in the adult literacy field". A questionnaire was devised and sent to virtually all adult literacy programs in the state, in an effort to determine the availability and use of computer technology in the delivery of adult literacy programs, as well as the current skill levels of teachers and tutors and the need for professional development.

The results reveal discrepancies in access to computer technology in different programs, which seem to reflect differences in attitudes to the place of computer technology in the provision of adult literacy education, as well as differences in funding arrangements. In particular, certain community houses expressed a crying need for more computers.

This raises questions about equity in funding and also philosophical questions about whether people need to learn to read and write to a certain level before they can use a computer, or whether they can or should be developing these skills using a computer as a tool. Is "computer literacy" within the domain of "literacy", or should it be taught by computer specialists?

The place of computing in Adult Literacy provision

In the last decade we have seen a burgeoning in the use of computers in adult education. Among practitioners, as for the wider community, the response to the opportunities offered by this new technology has ranged from embracing it wholeheartedly to resisting it with suspicion. For most teachers, the excitement of the possibilities offered by computers has been tempered by the consciousness that here was a new set of skills that needed to be learned, another demand on time and attention.

By the early 1990s the use of computers in Adult Literacy provision was sufficiently established in TAFE to warrant a survey into computer program needs and inservice training requirements, conducted by the State Adult Literacy Unit (Strempel, 1993). This research indicated a perceived need for more information about computer software and training in the delivery of computer assisted learning.

A more comprehensive survey was conducted nationally by the National Centre for English Teaching and Research (NCELTR) for the Adult Migrant Education Program (AMEP) (Corbel, 1996). In addition to examining the area of software for language learning, this research identifies a need for skills in the area of computers used as tools by both teachers and learners. The perception here has changed from one that sees computers as an additional education technology, as an opportunity for teachers to make use of a new methodology, to a concept in which computer literacies take their place alongside previously existing literacies, and computer-based communication is seen as offering new kinds of text.

Rationale for using computers in Adult Literacy

The nature and extent of the need to use computers in teaching literacy can be examined in several ways.

It is clear that computers are being used increasingly in the workplace, and so adult literacy learners who are seeking work should therefore develop some of the appropriate skills. Unfortunately it is difficult to predict exactly which skills a particular learner is likely to need, and even more unlikely that a particular teacher will necessarily have all the skills required to teach to a wide range of learner goals. However, it should be possible for practitioners to provide some generalised familiarity with computers, to concentrate on the more generic skills, and to focus attention on the more widely used forms of computing such as wordprocessing.

Related to this vocational rationale is the line of reasoning that computers in the future will be "everywhere", and that it will become increasingly normal for people to use them for everyday purposes. Already we have them in libraries for catalogues and in shopping centres as directories; many people use home computers for games, for writing tasks for personal or community purposes, or for conducting business, accessing information, socialising or communicating via the Internet. The latest figures show that Internet access is increasing rapidly:

> *There are now 130 million Net-connected people worldwide. This doubles the number recorded six months ago. In Australia, the figure is three million -- 16.6 per cent of the population. Eight months ago, only 6.7 per cent of the population was online. In line with the world figures, we are doubling our Net population every six months -- and heading towards saturation. (Harris, July 29, 1998, p.18)*

Another approach to the teaching of computing skills is to see it as developmental; using computers develops skills in research, indexing, accessing information and controlling it. At issue here is the extent to which these skills may be transferable. We must be wary of assuming that general skills of organising and problem-solving acquired in a digital environment will transfer easily to another situation; according to Jay Lemke, explicit instruction is needed.

> *People do not transfer abstract strategies from domain to domain unless they are specifically shown how to do so (or simply happened to do so). (Lemke, 1996, p.14)*

The implication is that instruction in making use of informational links on computers should include explicit comparisons with other domains if it is to be of use in those environments.

Some practitioners are able to tap into the motivational qualities of computers. Once adult students overcome any initial reluctance with using the technology, they will often display increased motivation and satisfaction in working with it. Wordprocessing has particular advantages over pen and paper in that it overrides problems with handwriting and permits error correction and other drafting procedures before a text is committed to paper (Inskip, 1992).

Language and literacy teachers often comment about the importance of literacy skills to self-esteem. Computer literacy acts in a similar way to boost the self-confidence of learners and enhance their sense of participating in mainstream society. This is particularly important where adult learners are parents who perceive they are falling behind their children who learn about computers at school. Rapid technological change has always created intergenerational tension as those who grow up with the new technology take for granted what their parents struggle to become accustomed to.

Reasons why computers are not used

Most of the Adult Literacy teachers in this survey were using computers as a tool in their teaching. It is likely that at least some of the reasons given above were directly or indirectly the basis for this; in TAFE, vocational goals are of particular importance. On the other hand, a large number of practitioners in the community sector did not use computers in their teaching, and some of them were able to identify the reason for this position.

The reasons for not using computers fall into three categories, the first two of which are closely related. The first was that the practitioners perceived that reading and writing were prerequisites for computer training, and that the skill levels of their students in the first area were too low to warrant exposure to the second. This runs counter to holistic approaches to literacy education, and possibly underrates the importance of computer skills for fully functional participation in many areas of life in this country.

The second reason was that learners with computing needs were referred to computer training specialists. This is a similar point of view in that it is based on the idea that computer skills are outside the province of literacy. It overlooks the possibility that computers can be used as an effective tool in the acquisition of literacy skills, as outlined by Inskip (1992). It may also be that computer literacy training is seen as not being feasible because of lack of resources, as for the third group below.

The third reason given for non-use of computers was the unavailability of computer facilities. This is a reflection of ACE funding arrangements, which do not provide specifically for computer equipment. In turn, this may be dependent on a perception in the funding authority that computing is not part of literacy. Thus it seems that the connection between literacy and computing skills needs to be examined and spelled out and communicated to a wider audience, with a view to establishing budgetary guidelines that are seen to be fair for all sectors.

Implications for staff development

It seems important in the first instance that the rationale for teaching computer literacy as part of Adult Literacy programs should be discussed and examined for its merits. As long as there are teachers who are reluctant to use computers for their programs, their voice must be heard and acknowledged. However, it is important too that the decisions about when and how to use computers should not be limited by access, nor by the availability of skilled practitioners.

A report by the Employment and Skills Formation Council for the National Board of Employment, Education and Training (NBEET), established five levels of computer skills: basic tool, enhanced tool, knowledge tool, innovative tool and creative tool. Recommendation 14 in that report states that:

> *An objective (should) be adopted to train all staff in Australia's education and training institutions to the level of enhanced tool skills user, to train more than 50% to the knowledge tool skill cluster and train more than 3% to the innovative/creative tool skills cluster by the year 2000. (Employment and Skills Formation Council, 1995, p. xiv)*

This recommendation is reiterated in the NCELTR report, which further advocates the ongoing "identification of competencies and their development into training modules". (Corbel, 1996b, pp. 50-51)

Thus there are two main areas to be addressed by a professional development program. The first and most essential is to improve the computer skills and levels of confidence of practitioners, so that learners are not unduly limited in the range of literacies they can acquire. The second is the skills associated with teaching computer literacies to students, so that computing skills are not merely an "add-on" as Lankshear suggests is happening (1996, p. 4), but an integral part of literacy learning.

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Lyn Bray

Examining the accounts of homeless people's needs to determine a role for language, literacy and numeracy training

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Introduction

This paper reports on a project that set out to respond to that part of the National Collaborative Adult English Language and Literacy Strategy (NCAELLS, 1993) that calls for Commonwealth and State governments, industry and the community sector to work together to provide programs for people with identifiable language literacy and numeracy needs so that they can achieve personal, educational and employment-related goals. It focused on examining various accounts of the nature of the language, literacy and numeracy needs of homeless people, specifically those who are clients of a particular service agency. This organisation is based in an area that has been identified as currently lacking any appropriate adult literacy provision. The agency in question had determined that it has clients with specific language, literacy and numeracy needs.

Who are the homeless?

In writing about homelessness within the city of Toronto in Canada, Trumpener (1997, Sec 1:7) has noted that definitions of this phenomena need to be broad enough to reflect the reality of contemporary urban life, and from this perspective, described it as including 'people who are homeless, transient, staying in emergency shelters, or underhoused in substandard apartments and rooming houses'. She then went on to note that *people who are homeless also tend to be living in extreme poverty and excluded from opportunities for employment, education, recreation and social contact.* Noting the many ways in which the conditions of homelessness in Toronto reflect conditions for homeless people in Brisbane, and, no doubt, many other cities around the world, this project has adopted Trumpener's (1997) definition of homelessness.

What is language, literacy and numeracy?

The meanings of the terms "language" "literacy" and "numeracy" are highly contested within political, economic and educational circles. This project acknowledged the relative and socially-contingent nature of language, literacy and numeracy, and interpreted these concepts to be what people need, or want to do, often in interaction with other people, to be able to go about their daily lives. This conceptualisation encompasses notions of language, literacy and numeracy as not just skills, but rather as 'value defined practice[s] within a cultural context (which must be defined) from community to community and not across the nation' (Cope at al, 1995:16 in McNaught et al, 1996:3). From this perspective language, literacy and numeracy can be viewed as communal resources, utilized by family, community groups as well as by individuals (Barton & Hamilton, 1998:5), and as incorporating LoBianco and Freebody's (1997:26) contention that 'literacy is ... for acting on and in the world'. In keeping with much of the literature about literacy for adults, and for the purposes of this project, the term "language" will refer to the requirements for language education for adult Australians for whom English may be a second, or additional language, and this point onwards, the term "literacy" will be taken to include these understandings and applications of "language" as well as incorporate notions of "numeracy".

In Gee's (1990) terms, literacy is 'firmly located within a discourse-centred frame' (Prinsloo & Breier, 1996:22), with discourse being described as:

> *composed of ways of talking, listening, reading, writing, acting, interacting, believing, valuing, and using tools or objects, in particular settings and at specific times, so as to display or to recognise a particular social identity.*
> (Gee in Gee et al, 1996:10)

Gee's (1990:142) notion of discourse conceptualises it as always more than just language, rather more as a sort of "identity kit". His conceptualisation also includes ways of distinguishing between primary and secondary discourses. According to Gee (1990), membership of a primary discourse is achieved without conscious effort as we are admitted to, and socialise within, the "family" (as this is defined within a given culture) and other initially acculturating groups. On the other hand, membership of secondary discourses of key institutions beyond the home such as schools, the workplace, churches and official offices, has to be learned, and must involve the development of a meta-knowledge concerning ways of valuing, believing, thinking and enacting social practice.

Conceptualising discourses as 'systems of meanings embedded in certain institutions, that in turn are determined by ideologies "in response to larger social structures" ' (Kress, 1985, quoted in Pennycook, 1994:124), underlies the significance of connections Foucault (1980:100) makes between discourse, knowledge and power. At a personal level, being literate becomes having 'mastery of, or fluent control over, a secondary Discourse' (Gee, 1990:153), and as literacy is 'always the shaped product of interested social action' (Prinsloo & Breier, 1996:22), it is also essentially plural, reflecting various forms, motives and actions of participants involved in any social interaction. At a societal level, the key social discourses that 'shape identity or "personhood" in society' (Prinsloo & Breier, 1996:22), emanate from the powerful social institutions mentioned above.

Within official discourses on literacy in Australia, found in various reports and documents emanating from governments and other sources, literacy is typically essentially framed as a functional, employment-related skill, while people who are deemed to have low literacy skills are construed as being "deficient", and from this perspective, may be held accountable for a range of social ills, including the nation's difficulty in trading competitively in the international marketplace (Castleton, 1997).

How is literacy need defined?

Just as definitions of literacy must capture the dynamic nature of literacy practices, so too must descriptions of literacy need be viewed as a changing continuum, 'with the variability over the stages of a person's life. ... Such needs are not constant, but may arise at different intervals, and in different intensities and forms in work and in community or family life' (McNaught et al, 1995:3-4), reflecting its role as a communal resource.

A number of reports over recent years have dealt with the difficulty of distinguishing between the concepts of "need" and "demand" for literacy training. The MODELL for Remote Areas Report (Castleton et al, 1995), that examined the need for adult English language, literacy and numeracy training in remote areas of Queensland, for example, identified high levels for such need across the state and across various groups in the community. However, in no area did the demand for such training match what may be described as the perceived need.

The situation can be further complicated when distinctions are drawn between the terms "need", "unmet need" and "demand": do the latter terms mean one and the same, for example? Interpretations of these concepts will differ according to *who* is doing the asking, *how* the questions are asked, for *what* purpose is the information being collected and *what* stakeholders are involved in the process, illustrating Foucault's (1976, 1980) claims that knowledge can be traced to different discourse practices that enclose the knowledge formulated from within them.

For the purpose of this study, the following distinctions of need, devised by McNaught et al (1996:4), have been adopted:

apparent	estimated from quantitative data sources including population statistics from census data, extrapolations from government department data bases and large-scale research surveys;
perceived	interpreted by service delivery agents, researchers, community welfare officers and interested/informed stakeholders, usually qualitative in nature;
expressed	typically obtained from clients or from people with direct access to clients.

According to these distinctions, "demand" is best understood as "expressed need", however it is worth noting that there can be considerable overlap across these different categories of data.

Client groups serviced by the target organisation

It would be doing a grave injustice to both the organisation and the people it serves to try to describe the centre's clients as a homogeneous group of socially disadvantaged people, other than to note that people use the centre because of pressing need, either short or long-term. Many of the groups found within the community that have frequently been categorised in various reports [e.g. *Come in Cinderella*, 1991; *Pathways to Quality*, 1991; *Enhancing Participation in Adult Literacy Programs*, 1992; *The Integration of Regional Adult Literacy Service Infrastructure with Adult Literacy Teacher Education and Training*, 1993; *Adult English Language and Literacy Provision by the Community Based Education Sector*, 1993; *The Modell for Remote Areas Report*, 1995; *Unmet need and Unmet demand for Adult English Language and Literacy Services*, 1996; *Youth employment: A working solution*, 1997] as "disadvantaged" and in need of adult literacy services, are represented within the target centre's client base. These groups include:

people of non-English speaking background;
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island people;
unemployed, particularly men;
youth;
intellectually and physically disabled;
women (though in limited numbers).

With respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, these clients of the centre may best be described as fitting within the category of "Urban" as determined by the National Aboriginal Education Committee (1984) and used by Nagi Binanga, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Standing Committee for Vocational Education, Training and Employment in Queensland (1995).

Sources of "apparent", "perceived" and "expressed" need

The project utilised a variety of data sources for analysis that included:

- relevant literature including reports and documents;
- relevant documentation and statistics kept by the centre;
- statistical data from government agencies;
- focus group sessions with staff from the centre and other informants;
- face-to-face interviews with a range of informants representing staff of the centre; other provider organisations in the target area; community groups and individuals as well as clients of the centre. Field notes were kept of all focus groups and interviews, and selected interviews were taped for closer analysis.

The various forms of data were reviewed and subjected to a systematic analysis and manual coding to identify recurring themes and emerging patterns. In addition, the taped interviews and focus group

sessions were analysed using techniques from applied ethnomethodology to determine if the themes emerging from the first stage of analysis were confirmed or dis-confirmed in the talk of key informants to the project.

Interpretive procedures derived from the ethnomethodological study of talk have been employed for the purpose of detailing and understanding participants' accounts of the relationships between "homelessness" and "literacy". These interpretive procedures draw attention to the categories of listener built into the talk and the positioning of the hearer with respect to the speaker: the project proceeded to document how certain attributes, knowledge and assumptions are attached, often by implication, to categories of people and how these attributes, knowledge and assumptions open certain avenues for understanding and practice, in this case with respect to "homelessness" and "literacy".

Apparent Need Established

Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) Census data (1996) and information taken from the Australian Bureau of Statistics Aspects of Literacy Assessed Skill Levels, Australia 1996 (1997) were used to provide macro data on levels of language, literacy and numeracy skills in the target area that establish "apparent" need for literacy provision. Information from census data show higher proportions of:

people (18.34%) born overseas from countries where English is not the first language;
Aboriginal (2.83%) and Torres Strait Islanders (0.48%);
unemployed people, including youth;
people with no post-compulsory qualifications;
people living alone

than figures reported as the national averages for these categories.

Interpretations of the findings of the Survey of Aspects of Literacy (SAL) support concerns made available from census data that many of the clients of the target organisation would fit within the group of people "at risk" because of their low literacy and numeracy skills. Within official discourses there are people who are typically attributed with low levels of literacy skills that are explained through a mix of cultural factors such as ethnicity, gender, socio-economic status and schooling experiences. Throughout these official discourses the people categorised with low literacy skill can be contrasted with those with higher levels of literacy who, in consequence, enjoy better levels of education, social status and employment. An implication that can be drawn from these discourses is that education and training, particularly literacy training, can be seen as a solution, at least in part, to the problems faced by certain groups of people.

This assertion is supported by the National Strategy of the Australian National Training Authority, *Towards a Skilled Australia* (1995). This document identifies access for all Australians as an essential principle of vocational education and training recognises that particular groups of people may be under-represented in the VET sector because of individual factors including limited skills in English language, literacy and numeracy, membership of a specific group, geographic and/or social isolation, or a combination of these. This need for people to be involved in training is clearly related within the document to widely-held economic rationalist discourses on national productivity and prosperity. Again, the various groups that make up the client base of the target centre are included within ANTA's categorisation of "under-represented" groups.

Perceived need established

Official recognition of concern for levels of literacy among Australia's adult population, that has grown since the late 1980s, has resulted in a plethora of reports that restate the case made by the official data: there is a clearly-made case of "perceived" among people who fit the category of "homeless" and may be clients of the centre involved in the study. Various causes are offered for this need, including peoples' poor schooling experiences; lack of opportunities to attend school; the nature of particular disabilities some clients have or their state of health; lack of access to the provision of services, and lack of appropriate literacy skills. There is general agreement that the consequences of these factors in

peoples' lives is the perceived "need" for adult literacy provision to counter personal, cultural and institutional barriers to full community participation.

The common premise underlying much of this literature is that literacy training is essential for all people within the community, with most reports grounding their arguments in particular "official" definitions of literacy that emphasise its essential personal and social benefits, and its relationship to wider societal economic goals. In this sense the literature may be seen as presenting 'popular and prevailing conceptions of literacy [that] equate its acquisition with positive and unproblematic outcomes' (Prinsloo & Breier, 1996:16)

What can be overlooked in this process, however, is consideration of what literacy provision means for its intended recipients. This point has been made clearly by Prinsloo and Breier (1996) who have demonstrated how discourses and practices of policy-makers and providers have received most attention in much of the literature on adult literacy to date, and who argue that attention must focus more directly on discourses that are centred on the people deemed to need literacy support. This focus on the recipients of literacy provision then leads into a consideration of how expressed need can be established.

Establishing expressed need

In this part of the study, emphasis is given to the analysis of the talk of a range of informants familiar with, or employed by, the centre as well as clients of that organisation. Interviewees were selected for the various perspectives they could offer to the examination of the relationship between literacy and homelessness in its various forms, based on the belief that 'interaction is institutional insofar as participants' institutional or professional identities are somehow made relevant to the work activities in which they are engaged' (Drew & Heritage, 1992:4). In their talk about homeless people and literacy, the informants drew on a cultural history of professional and community interpretations that they used to present talk hearable as both meaningful and trustworthy. The interviews provided opportunities for them to give various accounts of the relationships they perceived between homelessness and literacy. It then followed that such a working knowledge held by the selected informants, entailed particular understandings of "homelessness", potentially that some homeless people were deemed to have low levels of literacy that could be addressed through some form of literacy training.

Talking up the category of "homelessness"

The category of "homelessness" was clearly enacted in the talk of the informants and presented as an established category from traditional discourses including those of social welfare. There was a high degree of consistency as informants discussed and described homeless people, indicating the presence of widely held, institutional points of view on this topic.

"Homeless" people were typically depicted as:

low in self esteem
lacking in motivation
lacking skills
more likely to be male than female
more likely to be middle-aged than youthful
likely to have health problems
lacking insight into their own situation
lacking strategies to affect change in their situation.

This talk in general reflected the traditional, stereotypical categorisation of homeless people presented in official discourses of policy and practice, and demonstrates commonly-held beliefs about this category of people. Working within this established category, and its ensuing category attributions, emanating from traditional social welfare discourses on homelessness, enabled the interviewees to establish links between these discourses and readily-available discourses on adult literacy. Discourses on adult literacy, evidenced both in policy and practice, have typically identified adults with limited literacy skills with a similar range of attributions as those ascribed to homeless people. This link thus

enabled informants to describe various ways in which homeless people had a problem that may be addressed through some form, or forms of literacy training.

Accounting for homelessness and the need for literacy

The correlation between homelessness and literacy was realised in the talk by recourse to a complex set of causal relations that are representative of an institutional perspective. Invariably the link between being homeless and literacy was related to an intricate pattern of culturally determined attributes pertaining to experiences of schooling, race, health and socio-economic status. The assembly of people with a specific range of cultural attributes thus allowed for the formulation of taken-for-granted propositions that informants applied in the explanations of the causes and consequences of homelessness, and its link with literacy. Typically, informants grounded explanations of the conditions of "homelessness" in personal and behavioural factors rather than in systemic terms such as the nature of schooling, the state of the labour market, opportunities for retraining, perceptions and treatment of mental health problems in the general community, or the contraction of boarding house accommodation for low income earners.

In terms of expressing the significance of the literacy status of homeless people, informants were in agreement, that while it was an important issue among the coterie of factors that impacted on the lives of homeless people, it was not the most significant element in their lives, and neither was it described as the cause of homelessness. Rather than seeing lack of literacy as a precipitating factor towards homelessness, the talk of informants, excluding that of clients of the centre, generally identified limited literacy skills as an integral part of a range of characteristics of homelessness, namely low socio-economic status, lack of employment opportunities, lack of disposable income for suitable accommodation, lack of self-esteem and motivation for learning. Within these accounts, literacy was presented as the key to equipping individuals and groups of people so that they could make various transformations in their lives. In this sense, the talk resonated with a number of the major themes presented in official discourses not only around literacy but also those discourses that link literacy and work (Castleton, 1997).

While there was some agreement with the causes and effects of poor literacy skills, and unquestioned consequences of literacy training depicted in official discourses, there was, however, also acknowledgment of the extent to which these discourses did not reflect the reality experienced by many of the homeless. Among those interviewees who defined themselves as "job seekers", for example, there was a lived understanding of the actuality of the current economic situation in which jobs, particularly jobs that require low levels of skill, were difficult to find. According to the majority of the participants in this project, most of these jobseekers were resigned to this situation, while others, including many youth were angry because "they've been brought up on a diet of get educated and we'll give you a job".

The limited compliance with and trust in those parts of official discourses that promote a belief in the unquestioned good of literacy and therefore in the benefits of literacy training by some informants was regularly substantiated by the calling up of those discourses with which they were more familiar. This finding serves to highlight Street's (1995) concerns over how literacy can be valorised in certain discourses and Castleton's (1997:261) cautionary note that 'literacy [can] take on a signification that far outweighs what features of social life can be adequately and appropriately explained in terms of its actual role in people's lives'.

Existing literacy practices and a role for literacy training

Having stated a reason for caution when presenting literacy training as some kind of panacea for a whole host of social ills, there were, however various indications in the talk of the informants that provide some directions for the type of literacy training that may be worthwhile for homeless people. A common feature of informants' accounts was talk of the various networks that exist among homeless people, both within the various welfare centres they use and beyond. Moreover, these networks were characterised by accepted norms of behaviour, established and maintained by the members of those networks. Within these networks particular people are known to take on various roles, with evidence that there are those who assume the position of "literacy broker", a term used by Hull (1995) and others

to describe someone who applies his/her literacy skills on behalf of others. The networks may be seen as manifestations of the "communities of practice", identified by researchers such as Gee, Hull and Lankshear (1996), Prinsloo and Breier (1996), Castleton (1997), Hull (1997), Barton and Hamilton (1998) as existing in a range of contexts from workplaces to community settings, that are characterised by the mutual exchange of skills and practices. These existing, though informal structures were seen to offer the best possible base upon which to build any useful form of literacy provision, underlying the basic premise of beginning with the clients and what they have already in place, and working from there towards equipping clients for self-determination. This emphasis reinforces Street's (1996:4 - 5) argument that, when discussing literacy and the need for literacy provision for certain groups of people, attention should be more on the notion of "change" rather than on that of "access", as this lead to a different view on the nature of that provision. If the focus is put on "change", then literacy, and consequently the recipients of provision, can be viewed in a far more positive light, emphasising what clients have rather than what they lack. Such a framing allows for recognition of the ways in which people use literacy as a resource shared by members of communities of practice in which participants assume different roles for different purpose.

Links made in the literature from Australia (e.g. Hartley, 1989), and other places (Trumpener, 1997) between health factors and low literacy are reinforced in the talk of the participants. According to some informants, the need for some homeless people to be able to take more responsibility for their health and well-being creates an appropriate way of making literacy relevant in their lives. Furthermore, there was evidence in the talk of ways in which literacy as a communal resource was deployed to address other factors impinging on the lives of homeless people, such as securing and keeping suitable housing and support services.

While there were some jobseekers among the homeless people involved in this study, it was clear that many of them were not jobseekers, nor likely to become so. Generally speaking, homeless people were not described as wanting literacy training as a way to access employment and/or more training, but rather looking to it as means of enabling them to achieve greater personal and collective responsibility over their lives. Discourses on literacy for the homeless people therefore need to be less about providing the means by which people can access training, and maybe employment, and more about helping them "build the bridges" so that "homeless people can access mainstream services" and assume some measures of choice and control in their lives.

Outcomes of the study

This study has demonstrated the importance of ensuring that claims made for the "need" of literacy training are grounded not only in the accepted, official discourses of "apparent" and "perceived" need, but also suitably reflect the third perspective of "expressed" need that comes closer to the lived experiences of the individuals and groups framed within these discourses. It has shown that there can be disparities between the various ways in which literacy need is represented in official discourses and in practice. Official discourses on literacy and the needs of particular groups of people determined to have low levels of literacy, may not adequately portray the realities of how the consequences of low levels of literacy can be played out in the everyday lives of homeless people. They may also be shown not to recognise the many literacy practices that exist and flourish outside official discourses, such as those of schooling and work, but which result in making many people competent communicators (Street, 1997). Other discourses that challenge the dominant representations of literacy must be heard not only because they offer more realistic representations of everyday literacy users and their practices, but because they challenge the inherent power structures that exist within such dominant discourses.

The ways in which discourses around "expressed" need reflected themes presented in the discourses of "apparent" and "perceived" need demonstrate how discourses can be argued to both reflect and produce social realities (Castleton, 1997). However, the points of dissension between these discourses that have surfaced in this research also indicate the possibilities of affecting these dominant discourses so that they more accurately reflect the realities of homelessness, and appropriately incorporate opportunities for homeless people to be represented in ways that best "express" their needs. Overall, the study has highlighted the importance of the connection between improving literacy skill and better quality of life outcomes for the homeless. In particular, this quality of life relates directly the ability to have greater personal control over issues such as health, financial management, housing, and day-to-day interactions with government and welfare agencies.

Conclusion

The findings of this study lead to consequences for the kinds of literacy provision that could be offered to accommodate the needs of homeless people. The following points are raised for policy makers, infra-structure support providers as well as for literacy providers.

Realistically, there is only a small number of jobseekers among the homeless. This group could be targeted for literacy provision that focuses on improving literacy skills in vocational contexts. However, the kind of provision offered needs to include case management and job placement support services as well as be flexible and responsive enough to accommodate all factors of the lifestyle of homeless people, particularly youth, who make up much of this group.

For the majority of homeless people, however, the focus needs to be on literacy as a communal resource utilized variously by individuals and groups. The objective of any provision must be focused on equipping these people with the skills to achieve some social transformations in their everyday lives. The strategies of provision should incorporate existing networking arrangements that homeless people already access, including recognising the different roles that are in place within these networks.

Both of these recommendations have pedagogical implications for program development and delivery, resource development and personnel deployment. Rather than adopting traditional approaches that centre around a set program of structured classes, providers must view every interaction as a fully-fledged literacy (and learning) event. This approach has significant resourcing implications that need to be addressed in the preparation of tenders for the supply of funding for such programs.

There is need for greater collaboration between the various agencies that come into day-to-day contact with homeless people. Personnel involved in functional operations within agencies and provision must be more aware of the relationship between literacy and daily life, including such factors as employment, housing and health so that they can use every opportunity to not only mediate and facilitate better lifestyle outcomes for the client group, but increase skill levels at the same time.

The implementation of these recommendations that arise out of the outcomes of the study will assist in achieving the prime objective of all literacy programs, that is the opportunity for greater participation in all aspects of community life, thereby enhancing individuals' potential to be the kind of citizens they want to be. Setting full citizenship participation as a goal of these programs recognises the multifarious ways in which literacy serves individuals and groups in all aspects of life in today's world.

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Getting on the same line: utilising a concept attainment model of teaching in the numeracy classroom.

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Traditionally maths was taught as process. Contemporary education puts an increased emphasis on understanding this process. The National Staff Development Committee in *Adult Numeracy Teaching* (1995:35) suggest that, not only should students know how and why to carry out maths processes, they should also be able to make connections between the maths learnt in formal education and the real world, depicted with the following diagram:

Real world

Model

Language Symbols

These connections must encompass shared meaning; shared concepts. Mathematical concepts, like all other concepts, have often been equated with words and their use, for example, equivalent, means having the same value. 3/4 and 6/8 are equivalent. However, language development and concept development involve different intellectual processes. Language acquisition relies on meaning and association whereas concept attainment relies on organising according to perceived similarities that are publicly (culturally) agreed upon, and is learned from users of the concept in the linguistic culture. In a multicultural classroom concepts are not likely to have been developed from a shared epistemology and linguistic culture. Even with a homogenous group, there could be variations to conceptual understanding for concepts have both cultural and personal variations.

In addition to this, often the language of numeracy (maths) differs significantly from common usage of the language, but in other instances it doesn't. This mystifies maths and adds to a complexity and difficulty that many literacy students associate with maths.

The concept attainment model of teaching can be utilised within any session to reach shared meaning of concepts. The teaching of a concept assists students to recognise the characteristics of the concept that define it, and also to distinguish it from other concepts.

The concept attainment model is presented in six stages.

Stage 1: Presentation of the concepts. This is a brief but important step that clearly identifies the concepts under consideration, so that all students understand that the question they are facing is "What do we mean by ...?" Students are asked to explore their own meanings of the concept; to set out its distinguishing attributes.

Stage 2: Presentation of instances from the linguistic culture. This is an extenuation of the first stage where students examine instances of use of the concepts from a range of users of the concept in the linguistic culture (dictionary definitions, excerpts from film / prose / poetry) adding to or modifying the distinguishing attributes.

Stage 3: Presentation of labelled exemplars. Students examine labelled exemplars (both positive and negative) of the concepts, adding to or modifying the distinguishing attributes of the concept under consideration.

Stage 4: Initial testing of the concept. Students amend or confirm their perception of the concept by examining unlabelled exemplars (both positive and negative) and deciding whether or not they are members of the class.

Stage 5: Formulate a set of distinguishing characteristics of the concepts. Students articulate the basic distinguishing characteristics of the concept from what they have learned during the previous stages.

Stage 6. Test attainment of the concept. Students use the meaning of the concepts that they have formulated to generate further examples of the concept.

The shared meaning generated through the concept attainment model and the participation in the stages of presenting the model will help students to bridge the gap and make connections between the real world and the model, symbols and language we use in teaching numeracy.

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Toeing the line:
Incorporating the key competencies into numeracy sessions

Pam Ciampa

To successfully participate in work and/or study in the world of today, to be effective and productive, employees and students need to have certain abilities. These abilities have been termed 'Key Competencies'. These Key Competencies are not new skills - they are skills that have always been valued by employers and educators. What is new is that there is now a focus on developing them within our education and training systems.

Because two of the Key Competencies are 'Using mathematical ideas and techniques' and 'Solving problems', numeracy teachers may feel that there is no need to pay further attention to the Key Competencies. This is a misconception. The Key Competencies are inter-related and numeracy teachers need to consider the teaching processes and methods they utilise, so that their numeracy sessions are helping students to develop the full gamut of Key Competencies.

Therefore, numeracy teachers need to examine the other Key Competencies and consider how they can foster their development without shifting focus from mathematical skill development. The other Key Competencies are:

Collecting, analysing and organising information
Communicating ideas and information
Planning and organising activities
Working with others and in teams
Using technology

Concerning technology, does this mean we give students a calculator and consider that Key Competency dealt with? It could mean we set activities that encourage students to select from a range of tools, equipment and technology those that are appropriate and utilise them to successfully complete the activity. If so, does this mean an end to the classroom where students sit with pen and paper and work through problems? After all, another of the Key Competencies is working with others and in teams. If students always complete numeracy activities in a team situation, it is difficult to assess individual skill development. Working with others can also mean giving consideration to others, consulting with other students or with people outside of the classroom, and, yes, it can also mean taking part in group projects and activities.

When setting numeracy projects, activities and problems, numeracy teachers can do a great deal to incorporate Key Competency development. Numeracy teachers could ask themselves questions such as:

Do I always set problems, projects and/or activities where all the information is set out for the students? Or do I encourage them to get information from other sources, to work out what information they actually need, and to organise it themselves?

Do I set projects where I become the group leader and 'steer' all the planning and organising, or do I allow my students to plan and organise themselves?

Do I set deadlines that students have to meet, so that they learn to plan and organise their own work?

Do I ever require students to give an oral presentation or set up a display of the numeracy activity they have been working on?

Do I encourage them to share ideas and information with other group members?

Numeracy teachers do not have to concern themselves that in every activity or every session they address each of the Key Competencies. Although we list them separately, Key Competencies do not stand alone - they are inter-related and should be integrated into our sessions when and where appropriate. Since they are process based, they should be fostered through our teaching methods and through the application of good principles of learning.

Numeracy teachers have to 'toe the line' and encompass the full gamut of Key Competency development into their numeracy sessions.

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Technological tangles in adult literacy education

Bobby Harreveld

Introduction

My journey into the tangles of technology began when, as an adult literacy teacher, I wanted to explore the idea of 'flexible delivery using technology'. While at times this ongoing journey has been perhaps not dissimilar to a Pythonesque quest for the holy grail, consideration of the phenomenon 'flexible delivery using technology' has become clustered around a particular concept, namely teacher identity. We are told that teachers no longer 'teach'; they facilitate, consult, tutor, mentor and/or manage the process of learning (Flexible Delivery Working Party, 1993). Teachers are also known as practitioners; as distinct from theorists, researchers or academics. From these identity framing ambiguities, our 'teacher storying' in which lies the transformative power for pedagogical change, is largely silent. What does it mean to be a 'teacher' who uses technology in the flexible delivery of adult literacy tutor training program? "A great deal may be learned about teaching practices if we come to terms with the ambiguity of pedgogical events" (McWilliam, 1996, p.306).

Essentially I am arguing that the socio-cultural frames within which teacher identity is now being constructed are changing that identity from the outside, while from within we are expressing a desire for identity which has not been colonised by the forces of marketisation and technological innovation. Our pedagogies of practice, which were once relatively insulated from change, are continuously being reconstituted personally, socially and culturally (Grant, 1997; Reinking, McKenna, Labbo and Kieffer, 1998). Pedagogical practices are understood to be teachers' actions which reflect their notions of the relationships between power and knowledge in teaching/learning situations (Ungar, 1982; McWilliam, 1996). As teachers' stories change, so too does their identity (James, 1996, p.199). There is no simple pedagogical recipe being proposed here. On the contrary, it is acknowledged that social relationships are messy and the discourses fluid. As Giroux (1994) tells us, we are living dangerously in this age of identity politics. As adult literacy teachers in Australia, we are working within "new pedagogical vocabularies" which McWilliam (1996, p.313) argues have "dis-membered" us, rendering us "functionaries without self-interest, without desire, without any 'body' to teach (with)". This is not so much new pedagogies of practices as a "disembodiment of pedagogy via information technology" (McWilliam, 1996, p.312). Singh (1998, p.342) argues that "in order to intervene in and gain some measure of control over innovations" in (adult literacy) education, "those working within a socially critical paradigm must further develop their existing understanding of and skills in critical literacy". Therefore it is encumbent upon teachers to engage with these tangles of technology, literacy and pedagogy so as to make visible the issues of identity, textuality and difference from within the relations of social groups, agencies of power and the ongoing lessons of history (Giroux, 1994).

This can be achieved by re/appropriating notions of teachers as researchers by using action research methodology (McTaggart & Singh, 1986; Singh, 1994; Singh, Harreveld & Hunt, 1997) to tell the stories of teacher practice. Emerging from these dialogues of mutuality, reciprocity and equality (James, 1996; Clandinen, 1992) established via action research processes, is a transformation of teacher identity. An identity which can resist the efforts of the discourse colonisers, by using technology to re/distribute power to others (such as adult literacy tutors and students), re/claiming the language of teaching and learning as well as engendering positive social relations through and with technology. The specific stories used in this paper reflect identity change within a particular cultural world within which the use of technology in the flexible delivery of three interrelated adult literacy programs in a remote community was investigated. This action research project was funded by the Queensland Adult English Language, Literacy and Numeracy Council (QAELLN) in 1997. Longreach in central western Queensland was the location for an adult literacy program for thirty students, a tutor training program and an adult literacy teacher professional development course. Because of the project's timeline, these three programs were conducted simultaneously. Tutor and teacher programs were conducted from Rockhampton while the adult literacy program was conducted at the Longreach campus of the Central Queensland Institute of TAFE. This paper focuses on the implementation of the adult literacy tutor training program.

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Research Methodology and Analysis Methods

Harre's (1984) four-stage cyclical process through which identity change is enacted is blended with action research's recursive phases of planning, acting, observing and reflecting (Singh, 1994; Henry and McTaggart, 1986; Singh, Harreveld and Hunt, 1997). In providing a framework for constructing identity through transformative change, James' (1996) use of Harre's work was particularly useful as was Kemmis and McTaggart's (1982) theoretically grounded arguments for the transformative power of reflection on experience. In drawing together some of the threads of this action research project, the third stage of Harre's identity change process has been reached. Firstly, certain ideas, language and actions have been appropriated. Initial transformations then took place as new meanings were acquired and alternative actions explored. Thirdly, publications followed in which others have been given the opportunity to respond. As a result of earlier publications (Singh and Harreveld, 1997; Singh, Harreveld and Hunt, 1997), the embryonic identity of an adult literacy teacher using technology for the flexible delivery of adult literacy tutor training was framed, ready for further exploration via ongoing research. In its first explicit 'outing' of this concept, Huberman & Miles' (1994) interactive model of data analysis has been used to (a) reduce the data by coding, clustering and writing stories; (b) displaying the data so it becomes a basis upon which meaning can be constructed and (c) interpret these meanings, draw conclusions and verify them with reference to other secondary data sources. It would be wrong to claim that Harre's fourth stage of 'conventionalization' has yet been reached. These notions of teacher identity have not been tested enough to be able to stand as conventions of the social constructions of identity and pedagogical practices of adult literacy teachers using new technologies. However, if more teachers are able to connect with these stories, explore their perceptions and interpretations then we will further explore the intimate relationships between literacy and technology. New technologies will continue to inform pedagogical knowledge/s, thus contributing to ongoing socio-cultural transformations of teacher identity.

In keeping with the tenets of action research and its accepted tactics in the construction of meaning, Grant's (1997) multi-storied approach to data analysis was chosen for a number of reasons. Firstly, it enabled me to not only analyse and interpret these texts, but also unpack personal and social positions relative to learning specifically and life in general. Secondly, it gave voice to "our underlying assumptions, presuppositions and the wider social discourses to which they belong" (Grant, 1997). Therefore this concept of teacher identity is being built from a three-layered, multi-dimensional storying encompassing life, literacy and discursive practices (Grant, 1997). For the validity, reliability and trustworthiness of the accounts (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) from this type of data analysis it is important to note that in the final write up of this research, all three dimensions (personal, social and cultural) will be linked, related and connected.

Life is a narrative where we tell stories through which we can read our own and others personal, social and cultural identities (Grant, 1997). Identity is constructed from a repertoire of experiences which are built up over time, mediated differently via different technologies and grounded in social relationships. These stories are told through the following data sources: (1) seven electronically transmitted informal 'up-dates' from the adult literacy teacher to project executive officer/s over a five month period; (2) two 'work-in-progress' reports from the research team to the project management committee; and (3) a final formal report from what was an eight month long project (Singh, Harreveld and Hunt, 1997).

Social narratives of life with technology

Social dialogic relationships between tutors and teacher can be established via technology when they are located in different cultural contexts, time and space locations. This research has found that there is a necessity for all participants in the interactions to be committed. The teacher most of all, must be willing to submit that commitment to the sometimes sceptical group of adult learners (tutors and teacher colleagues) who need to be persuaded that they too can become committed to becoming literate through and with these technologies. Teachers are interpretive beings who through their storying, are continually connecting their own and others ways of acting and thinking with the literacies and discourses which constitute their identities (Grant, 1997). Stories from the evaluation of the technologies employed during this tutor training program showed that a combination of technology for program delivery is necessary, provided it is grounded in content which includes planning processes

characterised by tutors and teacher's joint decision-making about program implementation as well as specific focus on the recognition and diagnosis of adult literacy students' learning needs (Singh, Harreveld and Hunt, 1997).

Teachers are performers. Technologies are shaping our performances as never before. Two important variables in our arsenal of pedagogical practices which inextricably shape teacher identity are (1) voice quality, modulation and control; and (2) visual presence and body language control. With teleconferences and the telephone, it is initially the teacher's voice which mediates the register variables of communicative acts. While teachers may have once been judged by the quality of their voice projections to the rear of classrooms, the demands of nonvisual, synchronous, audio technologies require a different set of abilities. Tutors found teleconferences provide "immediate input; not as good but convenient if you do not have a babysitter, still better than nothing" (Singh, Harreveld and Hunt, 1997, p.124). One important lesson learned was that even without visual contact, relationships are still built upon assumptions: 'You don't sound like a blond' was the first comment a tutor made to me when we met in Longreach following previous telephone/teleconference communications. She was a particularly perceptive person because I'm not naturally a blond! Voice alone transmits more data than we have ever explicitly considered.

Videoconferencing was another technology used in this project. While initially perceived as the embodiment of inflexibility because of its institutionally privileged pedagogical practices which teachers were expected to use (Singh and Harreveld, 1997), it was eventually considered worthwhile. Visual presence and programming ability were vital ingredients of 'performances'. Videoconferencing came to be seen as one amongst a number of means by which tutors and teachers could develop social relationships within which teaching/learning could take place. It was considered a technology of choice for tutors and teachers who participated in its trials. There was also the potential to enhance consistency of teacher/tutor contact because through it behaviour patterns reminiscent of 'attending class' could be provided, which for some adults is a positive learning reinforcer. Overall, the videoconference experience:

> *was good ... it's just like having a proper teacher there ... no children around me; three second delay too slow, advantage in seeing the face at the other end ... brings in a more personal side...know the teacher, feel comfortable ... able to ask questions* (Singh, Harreveld and Hunt, 1997, p.124).

For both tutors and teacher, the humorous aspects of socialisation which are so important in all teaching/learning situations in adult literacy were found to be fostered best via videoconferencing, followed by teleconference and telephone. Written, asynchronous technologies such as email and fax did not lend themselves to the same degree of levity. Email had its uses however, it was found to be good for "written communication ... good for getting questions and assignments through, had time to think about it as you write ... take it in more than listening over the phone' (Singh, Harreveld and Hunt, 1997, p.124). In a scenario akin to fieldwork practicums, teachers (and tutors) need time to 'play' with all technologies, as well as pedagogical space to take risks and experiment in non-threatening socio-cultural contexts.

Constructing identity through critically social practices

Teacher identity has been produced from within relations of power which told the story of what it has meant to be an adult literacy teacher through historical forms of accountability, its "social forms and modes of ethical address that appear objective, universally valid and consensual" (Giroux, 1994, p.47). Firstly, we can identify these representations of teachers by asking 'whose interests does this framing of accountability serve?' Secondly, McWilliam's (1996) challenge to the "surveillance of pedagogical work" (p.313) of teachers can be used by teachers when interrogating the texts of accountability in program provision. The history of twenty years of adult literacy provision in Australia has initially seen energies devoted towards the problematisation of adult literacy as a social phenomenon. This was followed by the processes of global restructuring and destructuring through which "the nation state now constructs itself as being charged with the responsibility for defending and regulating the conditions needed for the formation of a global economy" (Singh, 1998, p.346). Texts of accountability such as competency based curricula, together with the policies and procedures of program administration can be represented as unproblematic, unquestionable 'givens' or they can be appropriated by teachers and

strategically re-read and enacted in ways which create differences in teachers identities and ultimately their pedagogical practices (Singh, 1998).

Verification of student enrolment is a vital component of every adult literacy program because each student contact hour serves to generate the payment of monies for the physical and human resources of program delivery. In most instances, the payment of student (including tutor) fees is another procedural text integral to program delivery. Negotiation of these texts via paper-based printed forms sent via the post, confirmatory telephones and faxes, electronic data-base entry of information at locations remote from tutors, students and teacher were found to be time consuming and frustrating. These texts, served to confirm teachers as the policy and procedures 'police' of program provision. However, another way of establishing knowledge/power relations was possible when:

> *While she was in Rocky, Mary spent a day at Quay Street. It was a good time to check up on student enrolments - tracking down forms which had disappeared into a black hole. She also came into classes with me, and talked to the staff and students. It was a worthwhile experience at workshadowing for her. This is definitely a practice we should use more often with adult literacy teachers and tutors - not just in an ad hoc manner, but planned. Work-shadowing could take a few days and cover a variety of adult literacy teaching sites and students. The administration and curriculum management practices were also of interest to her. We filled up yet another computer disk with copied files! As you can imagine, the 'flight lounge' members made her feel welcome (Email Update No. 6).*

Curriculum accountability was found to need revisiting because "current pathways as set out in syllabus modules have been found to be rigid in interpretation, unequal in opportunity and non-reflective of the richness of experiences and qualifications people from various professions, trades and life in general can bring to the work of adult literacy education" (Singh, Harreveld and Hunt, 1997, p.156). A re-reading of curriculum, policy and procedural accountabilities in adult literacy program provision has also recommended that:

- local tutors and teachers be trained to work across a variety of adult language, literacy and numeracy areas;
- tutors can be either paid or unpaid (volunteers);
- while adult literacy teachers (including language and numeracy) should still be held accountable for the educational integrity of programs, they do not have to be physically located within the same community;
- coordinators, tutors and teachers recruited to this work should have planned educational pathways available to them (adapted from Singh, Harreveld and Hunt, 1997, p.160).

A written study guide was necessary for both tutors and teacher as a base-line teaching/learning communication. Adherence to adult literacy principles including negotiation of a shared curriculum for learning found the certain elements of accountability in competency based tutor training curricula to be largely irrelevant. In one reading, the unproblematic atomisation of a tutor's job via such curricula did not reflect the holistic nature of their teaching and learning circumstances. On the other hand, the use of questioning and investigatory practices (including modelling) to uncover how these texts position readers (teacher and tutors), provides tutors with their first lesson in critical literacy strategies. Other interpretations and actions were legitimised through these practices, using videoconferencing, email responses and teleconference discussions. Teacher and tutors jointly constructed alternative readings of texts which still served the 'multiple masters' of adult literacy program provision.

In conducting a tutor training program with a teacher remote in time and place from adult literacy tutors, accountability for program delivery is mediated differently. The teacher is held accountable to funding source/s for the pedagogical (and financial) integrity of the programs tutors are implementing with their adult students; and the tutor training program itself. Such accountability becomes cumbersome and irksome if it is couched in 'new' vocabularies within 'old' constructions of power and control. Kell and Hill (1997) warn that the profession (of teaching) is in danger of being deprofessionalised as the role of teachers and the context of their work has diminished their autonomy and neglected larger questions relating to the theory and practices of adult learning using new technologies. This research project profiled some aspects of the profession of adult literacy teaching and contributed to the ongoing development of "an agenda for change which addresses the challenges

of the new technologies of work and learning" (Kell and Hill, 1997, p.73) as well as a tentative articulation of teacher identity in a culturally diverse, pluralist society.

A Discourse for Identity

In articulating an identity discourse, the data analysis processes of this research have not focused on the micro aspects of discursive practice, rather the social processes and sociocultural changes in practice - the norms and conventions of practice within broad institutional and societal contexts (Fairclough, 1995). When teaching through and with new technologies, teachers do not have to suspend their capacity for critical literacy (Gilding, 1994) if they adopt the language of an adult literacy discourse within the world of vocational education training. That discourse can be colonised from within so as to create another discourse of self-generative identity.

Adult literacy teachers' lived relations of power and knowledge (or pedagogical practices) are evident in their engagements in particular types of activities. The logistics of flexible delivery using technology see teachers operating as goods despatchers, instructional designers, writers, project managers, learners and teachers of new technologies (for example email, internet navigation, word processing, videoconferencing). In explaining the logistics of these operations and their role in discourse construction, teachers remote in time and place function more as medical specialists. Using a range of technologies, they share their knowledge and experience, while at the same time learn how that knowledge functions in different socio-cultural contexts. Through and with these technologies, distributive power relations are also established.

If we are sincere about believing that literacy for the twenty-first century is achieved through and with technology then access to computers and ongoing training in their use is imperative. The following recommendation has been used to focus attention on the importance of attention to social and power relations in the distribution of resources:

> *A free laptop computer and bubble jet printer should be included for every person who enrols in an adult literacy coordinator, tutor or teacher training program. Internet ready and with appropriate integrated word processing software, the laptops would remain the property of the 'students' for the length of their training programs. They would be connected via email to their teacher (for example the tutors and teachers in Longreach connected with their teacher in Rockhampton). If the tutors and teachers continued with their adult literacy work, the laptops could remain with them throughout their tutor and/or teaching programs for them to share with their students in their literacy programs. When the work concludes, the laptops would come under the control of the coordinator. Negotiations with the local library or computer shop may mean they could be rented by other people in the community (Singh, Harreveld and Hunt, 1997, p.161-162).*

While there exists a culturally preferred and legitimated way of being a 'flexible delivery teacher who uses technology' (Flexible Delivery Working Party, 1993), possibilities for resistance have been found within the nature of adult literacy teachers' work itself. Our work begins with our students, mediating their learning within larger social and cultural framings. Hence tutor training using technology can be a tangled web indeed:

> *Negotiation of mutually convenient times for video and/or audioconferences has been a frustrating experience. It appears that tutors are only available as a group from 5.30 p.m. onwards on the Monday and Tuesday evenings. Now these are the same evenings that the literacy programs start at 6.00p.m.*
>
> ...
>
> *In the forthcoming weeks, I am going to try one-to-one telephone calls. Am going to check convenient times to ring e.g. on lunch break at work, at home in the evening. Asking them to telephone me has not worked. It may be that they do not want to ring from the TAFE campus and of course the cost of ringing from their home bases can be prohibitive (my telephone bill attests to this!)*
> *(Email Update No.5, 1997)*

Computer mediated communication can promote participation in learning, reduce anxiety, increase tutor (as student) autonomy and motivation while creating technologically specific forms of literacy (Chapman, 1997). Email was the main form of computer mediated communication used throughout the project. In its asynchronous form, it was found to have advantages which have already been noted in this paper (Singh, Harreveld and Hunt, 1997, p.124). However, it too can become tangled in practice.

> *It was disconcerting to hear of the continued problems with email at the Longreach end. Quay Street's email is still not working as we can neither receive nor send. Repeated requests to the technicians do not meet with success. I have given Longreach people my home/university linked email address in the hope that we may be able to get something going that way. It is a shame we still can't get this moving though because both Rockhampton and Longreach tutors were looking forward to 'chatting' to each other as well (Email Update No.5, 1997).*

In their work with the Capricornia Educators' Professional Development Consortium, Moran and Martin (1997, p.25) found that "it was only towards the conclusion of the project that participants slowly showed some interest" in the use of electronic mail for on-line discussion and exploration of issues and topics. This project ran for two and a half years with Moran and Martin (1997, p.25) postulating "whether in time the e-mail discussion groups would have gained greater support." This project also found that "expense and time were major deterrents" to teachers accessing a specially constructed internet web site (Moran and Martin, 1997, p.25). Teachers need time to learn new ways of acting when they function as both teachers and learners. They also need ready access to effectively functioning technologies so this time can be productively spent. Through these actions comes the confidence to take pedagogical risks.

Because of its speed and informality, electronic mail was the preferred technology of transmission for informal activity reports which were part of the contractual conditions for the research project.. These activity reports served two purposes. They were integral to the legitimated means by which unfolding events and ongoing actions could be conveyed to the funding body. Because they were constructed from my diary notes together with a 'downloading' of current memories and emotions, they also became important research artefacts. Not all went smoothly with their transmission via the preferred medium however, with faxes having to be used as back up to ensure the messages were received. Even then, patience was needed when having to use two, sometimes three technologies to send the one message. From the third email on, all email messages were backed up with either a fax or a telephone call. Attachments of more lengthy documents were not always successful due to technological incompatibilities at either end of the electronically mediated communication:

> *If I can, will email this note to you as an attached document. Am going to send it via fax also - just in case!*
> (Response to a tutor's report, 6 June, 1997)

> *I won't run the risk of an attachment again - the last few attempts have discouraged me*
> (Email Update No.6, 1997)

Therefore there is a tension between what is privileged in public definitions of flexible delivery using technology on the one hand and the repertoire of experiences narrated in these stories on the other.

Conclusion

Theoretical frameworks of critical literacy have been informed by this knowledge. Adult literacy teachers can (and do) engage in critically social practices from within the discourse of 'flexible delivery using technology'. To interrogate questions of privilege and control in curriculum, policies or procedures of program provision, teachers do not have to operate either physically or intellectually from a marginalised periphery of power or knowledge. Teachers do not have to 'leave the stage', thereby denying a desire which got them into the profession in the first place. Teachers using technology for the flexible delivery of adult literacy programs take pedagogical risks in competency based curriculum interpretation. They are conscious of costs and logistics. Above all, they are 'passionate' about their work while using their lived experiences to make meaning out of the institutional and ideological discourses of power and knowledge within which this work is enacted.

Acknowledgments

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Lining up secondary students for adult literacy programs: some reflections on a new partnership

Angela Hill

Overview

This paper will review the experiences of a group of teachers in Townsville who are implementing the *Certificate 1 in Vocational Communication*, a curriculum derived form the Queensland adult literacy curriculum, the *Certificates in Vocational Access*. The paper will present teachers' experiences with the professional development programme designed to support teachers, as well as their trialing of the curriculum in the secondary setting. The paper concludes by highlighting a range of tensions for secondary teachers working with students using adult literacy pedagogy, and urges a more earnest attempt by the "adult literacy " sector to move towards meaningful partnerships with secondary teachers.

VET in Queensland schools

As is the case across Australia, Federal and State initiatives are driving vocational education and training (VET) programs into secondary schools. Commonwealth policies such as:

- Full service schools for students at risk; and
- Mutual obligation

are ensuring that many more 15-18 year olds are remaining at school

State initiatives escalating since the 1994 Shaping the Future report include:

- Increased emphasis on school based apprenticeships
- the development of Board of Secondary School Studies VET registered subjects

which provide a new range of options for students in school.

Why use adult literacy curriculum in secondary schools?

During 1995-96 the Board of Secondary School Studies, prompted by the Queensland Adult English Language, Literacy and Numeracy (QAELLN) Council, noted concerns that Year 10 students appeared to have 'inadequate literacy', and decided to develop an appropriate curriculum to meet their needs. The Certificate in Vocational Access was developed and trialed in 1997 by a range of secondary schools, following some consultation with adult literacy providers.

Preparing Teachers for implementing the curriculum.

As with the introduction of other VET subjects in secondary schools, the new literacy curriculum also included human resource requirements that many practising secondary teachers did not have. A trial of the National Staff Development Committee *Adult Literacy Teaching* Programme in the Townsville area revealed that many teachers were looking for a programme that focussed more specifically on the needs of adolescent learners in the school setting. A 40 hour programme, *Literacy Learning in Secondary Schools* was developed and trialed in Townsville during 1997 and 1998.

Teacher reactions to Professional Development.

As with the introduction of many VET programs in secondary schools, teachers were unaware of many of the larger issues associated with Competency Based Training, and a range of other VET frameworks. The reactions of the teachers to the professional development, including the confusion teachers face with the introduction of such different discourses is noted.

Teachers' experiences with curriculum.

During the professional development programme, and in evaluations carried out during the first 6 months of implementation, teachers noted a range of issues that compared and contrasted often sharply with their preparation for secondary English teaching. Some of these include:

- Good practice in initial assessment
- Moving away from whole group lessons
- Negotiating the curriculum
- Workplace communication
- Moving from text books as resources
- Adolescent lifeworlds - engaging with their experience

New tensions

The introduction of the *Certificate 1 in Vocational Communication* raises a range of issues for teachers and the secondary education system that would be best dealt with in cross-sectorial ways Unfortunately, the open training market, including the policies of 'user choice' and National Competition Policy discourage such collaboration. These issues include:

- Selection of students for *Certificate 1 in Vocational Communication*;
- Resourcing adult literacy practice models in secondary schools;
- Student options on completion of the Certificate;
- Understanding literacy needs across the senior secondary school curriculum.

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Contractor safety training resources

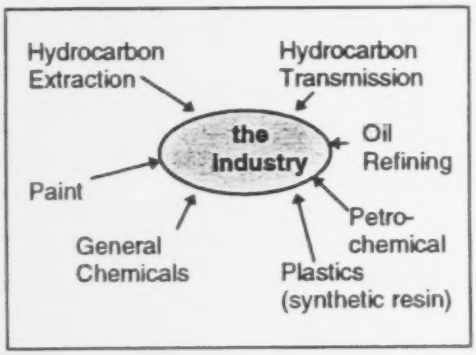
Kevin Hummel

Context of the project

The industry

This project produced learning resources for maintenance employees and contractors in the Chemical, Hydrocarbons and Oil Refining Industries. This is an industry sector within the Process Manufacturing industry grouping and is the subject of a National Training Package.

This industry sector is vast in terms of geographic spread, capital invested and range of products. It ranges from projects like the North West Shelf (hydrocarbons extraction) through the operation of gas distribution pipelines (hydrocarbons transmission), the refining of oil (oil refining), the manufacture of plastics and other synthetic chemicals (petrochemicals) to the manufacture of household detergents and chemicals (general chemical) and paints (paint).



The people

Typically about 40% of the permanent workforce are operating personnel (plant operators, plant technicians). The remainder of the permanent workforce are a mixture of the normal support staff required by any manufacturing concern. The total workforce is relatively small by normal manufacturing standards for the capital investment in plant and equipment.

Contractors make up an additional, floating workforce. The major group of contractors are maintenance contractors. They may be called in for a range of minor jobs which the permanent workforce are unable to handle for some reason.

In addition to this ongoing need to employ maintenance contractors is the phenomenon known as 'the shut down'. The nature of the plant and processes used, and the high level of capital investment, dictate that the plant is operated 24 hours per day, 7 days per week, 365 days per year. A shut down is triggered by the regulatory requirements for regular safety inspections of plant like pressure vessels. All major maintenance and a range of minor plant modifications are 'saved up' to be done at the next shut down. These are very expensive operations as the cost of an idle plant can run into millions of dollars per day. Thus, when a shut down happens, activity is feverish and usually goes on 24 hours a day. The plant workforce grows enormously for the shut down. One oil refinery took on an additional 800 or so contractors for four weeks for the shut down.

These contractors are the focus of this project.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

The National Training Package

The Chemical, Hydrocarbons and Oil Refining Training Package concentrates on the competencies required by operations personnel. Other personnel are covered by other relevant Training Packages.

Contractors have their technical skills covered by other relevant training packages (eg. metals). There are specific hazards which contractors will not have experienced before working in this industry. The specific, safety related competencies required for working in this industry are covered by two competencies in the Chemical, Hydrocarbons and Oil Refining Training Package:

- OH&S 100: Follow defined OH&S policies and procedures
- Permit 200: Work in accordance with an issued permit.

The training package establishes a Statement of Attainment which may be awarded to people who are competent in both OH&S 100 and Permit 200.

The Contractor Safety project

The target audience

Maintenance contractors are a mixed group.

A significant proportion are trade or advanced trade qualified. These trade contractors have well developed technical skills but often lack any appreciation of the hazards peculiar to this industry and of the precautions needed to control these hazards. This group generally has acceptable literacy skills.

Another significant group are not trade qualified. Many of this group have no post school education or training, and some have rather poor schooling experience. Many are of a non-English speaking background. Typically this group is employed because they have the necessary 'brawn'. They may have even less appreciation of the hazards and the control precautions needed. They tend to have generally poor literacy and some also have poor English skills.

Why this project

This project was recognised as important to the industry by Manufacturing Learning Australia (MLA - the industry ITAB) for a number of reasons.

All people working in this industry need to be able to do so safely. To do this they need to recognise the hazards and be able to implement the control measures required. Training is a significant part of this process.

The strong focus on safety by the industry has led to it being a safe industry[1] . Despite this, the safety record for contractors is not as good as it is for employees. Statistics gathered indicate that contractors are about 2.6 time more likely to be injured than are employees. The variability of safety statistics are also about 3 times greater for contractors than it is for employees.

The training given to contractors has varied between companies. While there has been regional co-operation (eg in Gladstone and Kwinana), generally training has been specific to each individual company. This has led to duplication of training, no mutual recognition of training already received from another company and significant variability in the training given. The assessment of competence achieved has also been varied.

[1] Workers' compensation premium rates are about the same as for retail and about a quarter of that for heavy engineering.

While the individual hazards vary greatly from plant to plant, the general principles are common. It is believed that at least part of the problem with contractor safety is related to the poor literacy levels of some contractors.

This project is seen as an opportunity to provide best practice training and assessment resources in the common principles and to focus that training on those with poorer literacy skills. It was also seen as an opportunity for MLA to provide support particularly to the smaller companies in the industry who are less able to develop their own resources.

Resource Development

The approach

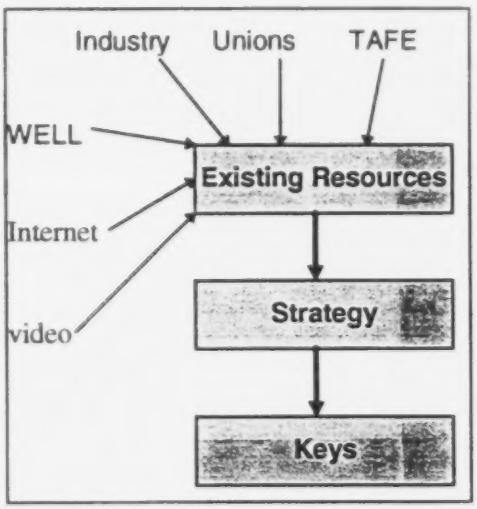
It was decided that this project would not aim to increase the literacy levels of contractors, but rather would develop training which would enable them to do their job safely, at their existing level of literacy. Among the reasons for this decision were the factors that this package would be delivered by industry trainers who are not literacy experts, and that both the industry and the contractors were keen to 'get on with the job' and any training which deviated too far from this would not be supported by either the industry or the contractors.

The approach then was to first determine what was critical for safe working in the industry, and then decide the best approach to help contractors with limited literacy become competent in these critical things. It was decided to aim the training at people with literacy at level 2 on the National Reporting System[2] . The area is one of considerable technical, and regulatory, complexity and existing material would typically be at least at level 3.

Defining the key issues

The Training Package had defined the relevant competencies. However, this left open the nature of key literacy issues and the best training approach to meet industry's needs.

The first step was to get the industry involved. To do this, a circular letter summarising the intended project was sent to the industry using the MLA data base. In addition key companies were contacted directly and a meeting was held with the project steering committee. The key union for contractors (AMWU) was also contacted directly.



This approach provided:

- a range of industry contacts who would provided feedback
- a range of existing training resources from various companies.

Concurrently a search of the literature was undertaken for existing resources. This had several parts:

- a search of the WELL data base
- an Internet search
- a video catalogue search
- a search for, and of, existing curriculum.

[2] Coates, Fitzpatric, McKenna, Makin, 1994-5, *National Reporting System*. Australian National Training Authority.

An analysis of the material discovered as a result of these searches allowed the development of a 'strategy' document which spelt out the 'who, why, what, when, where and how' issues for this project. This document was circulated to industry and other stakeholders for comment and approval before proceeding.

Particular issues confirmed from this preliminary work include:

- this would NOT be a resource to teach basic reading and writing, but rather would be a resource which could be used by those with limited literacy ability
- the resource needed to support group, trainer centred training as well as possibly some individualised training
- it needed to be about 1½ - 2 hours long to receive industry support.

Feedback from this 'strategy' document, combined with further research, led to the development of a 'keys' document which explored the key questions which a contractor needed to have answered satisfactorily in order to work safely. This document was also circulated to industry and other stakeholders and became the foundation for the eventual structure of the learning resource.

This procedure provided a technical validation of the approach we were taking.

The resources

A handy device

A simple device was needed to help contractors get the right information in a manner they could understand. The 'keys' document had proposed six key questions which a contractor should have answered to their satisfaction before they started a job. A bit of judicious jiggling saw this reduced to five key questions and the emergence of:

the hand

The hand became a powerful device for prompting the contractor to ask the key questions. The contractor booklet starts with 'the hand' and proceeds through these five key questions.

Best practice

In this industry, best practice would see contractors doing all or most jobs 'under a permit to work'. A 'permit' is a certificate which defines what can and cannot be done and how it may be done. It is related to the hazards and hazard control measures. The permit form reflects the regulatory complexity of the area more than good communication practice. Company specialists complete the permit stating that the job area has been made safe and what the constraints are on the contractor. The contractor signs the permit to say they agree the job area is safe[3].

[3] This is why it is inappropriate for this training to cater for 'illiterate' contractors as they should be able to read this permit. The aim of this project is to increase their ability to interpret the permit and ask key questions.

There are three main types of permits, and a range of other permits. The 'five key questions' (the hand) apply to all permits. Contractors should be able to interpret these permits as they must abide by them. After working though the five key questions, the resource then moves to case study type activities requiring the contractor to interpret example permits.

Integration of OH&S

Contractors need to be competent in following OH&S procedures as well as working under a permit. This approach has allowed us to integrate key aspects of the OH&S competency into 'the hand' and 'the permits'.

Contractors are employed by contracting companies. These companies have an obligation under the Occupational Health and Safety Act to ensure their employees (the contractors) have basic OH&S training such as the use of Personal Protective Equipment. This approach allows us to assess a sample of these basic OH&S competencies, so checking that the contracting company is meeting its obligation and allowing 'top up' training as required and appropriate.

Optional extras

Because of the variability of the learner coming into this training, it may be appropriate in some situations to provide additional, related training to that given directly by the resource developed. The resources make provision for this additional training by reference to appropriate video resources on specific topics. These videos were selected based on their relevance to the Australian industry and their practices and the language demands made by the video. These resources could either be screened by the trainer, or the contractor may make arrangements to view them individually where there is a specific need.

The products

Resources produced

There are four resources for this training:

- Contractor booklet
  - 'The hand' - key questions
  - The permit system - information and activities

- Contractor crib card
  - Pocket sized, double sided card
  - Summarises 'the hand' - key questions.

- Trainer guide
  - Trainer's responsibility
  - Suggested emphases for each section
  - Overhead transparency masters
  - Suggested additional resources

- Assessment
  - Suggested tools
  - Suggested competence assessment guide

Contractor booklet format

The wide spread of the target audience, the technical complexity of the subject matter and the regulatory implications from this type of training created a special blend of circumstances to be met with a resource which needed to cater for those with a limited literacy ability.

Most materials available in this area (including many commercially available videos) ignore the literacy issues. The challenge is to provide the bare bones for those of limited literacy ability, while also providing the background reasoning for those who want more information. The challenge further is to do this in a manner which will encourage the 'bare bones' user to go a bit further as and when they are able.

The normal factors of font style and size, line length, sentence and paragraph length and level of language were of course incorporated into the design. To provide a 'bare bones' resource which also encouraged the 'bare bones user' to delve deeper, we developed a format for the contractor booklet which integrated a bare bones summary with a plain English explanation on the one page. Mini case studies and simple learner activities were also integrated. Rather than confuse the user with abstract icons and task directions, the components flow from one to the other being distinguishable through font and other stylistic features. This along with the device of 'the hand' and the permit interpretation information and activities gives us a set of resources which meet the technical requirements while still being accessible to people of poor literacy levels.

Developer details

This project has been undertaken by a consortium of:

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And

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Receipting rate payments: how well are these skills captured in the office-administrative standards for level three trainees?

Ann Kelly

Introduction

In addition to the multiple roles that adult literacy teachers have recently occupied (Kelly & Searle, 1998; 1), the new role of workplace assessor is emerging in response to the increasing prevalence of training taking place on-site. While many literacy teachers have completed relevant courses designed to equip them to determine workers' competence to meet ratified industry or occupational standards, the actual process of fulfilling this role remains problematic.

This is particularly the case in the clerical area where the standards are conceptualised in a very general but highly structured way, while clerical practices appear to be particular to every office environment and both complex and overlapping in nature. In this paper, the duties of a level three council office trainee are presented and discussed to show how the structure of the standards and the descriptors of both the units and elements of competency that have been ratified are inherently inadequate for this actual position. Further support for my case is provided through an analyses of transcripts from two short interactions between the trainee and customers as these duties are accomplished.

The national clerical-administrative competency standards (Private sector)

In 1993 the first edition of the *National Clerical-Administrative Competency Standards (Private Sector)* (NOSFAB) was endorsed by the National Training Board. Since then, the standards have been modified twice (Australian National Training Authority/Admin Training Company, 1997). However, the framework that was adopted in the first set of standards has remained, as have most of the individual elements, although a number have been expanded. The current Level Three standards are reproduced below in Table 1.

Table 1: Level 3 Office Administration Trainee Units of Competency (National Clerical-Administrative Competency Standards - Private Sector, 1997)

Information Handling (INF301): Maintain information records systems to ensure its integrity
Communication Skills (COM301): Collect and provide information to facilitate communication flow (COM302): Take dictation to produce a text
Enterprise Skills (ENT301): Provide information and advice regarding the products/services of the organisation to meet client needs (ENT302): Process client complaints to ensure the goals of the enterprise are met
Technology Skills (TEC301): Use the advanced functions of a range of office equipment to complete daily tasks (TEC302): Design and develop documents, reports and worksheets. (TEC303): Maintain computer files. Use keyboard skills and advanced (TEC304): Operate and maintain computer printer
Organisational Skills (ORG301): Coordinate own work schedule with that of others to achieve team/section goals (ORG302): Organise schedule on behalf of others to achieve team/section goals
Team Skills (TEM301): Negotiate with team members to allocate and complete tasks to achieve team goals
Business Financial Skills FIN301: Maintain daily financial records for accounting purposes FIN302: Monitor cash control for accounting purposes FIN303: Monitor stock levels to maintain enterprise activities FIN304: Process payroll FIN305: Maintain financial records for reporting purposes

A level three clerical-administrative trainee case study

Natalie (a pseudonym), one of the level-three trainees in my doctoral study, is employed in a rural shire council office. The major activities that she performs daily in this role are listed in Figure 1 in descending order of prevalence.

Figure 1: Major activities performed by a shire council Level 3 trainee every day

In the Office	Outside the Office
1. Answers the telephone and redirects calls	6. Delivers mail to and collects other mail from council depots and the post office
2. Receipts payments received by mail using both paper and networked computer forms	7. Purchases one or two newspapers
3. Deals with face-to-face requests for information, payments, deliveries, and so on	
4. Opens, sorts and delivers the mail internally	
5. Prepares mail for post	

Thus, it can be seen that Natalie's role is contingent primarily on three forms of interaction with customers, all of which occur via different modes: through responding to requests for information, for the processing of payments and for deliveries in face-to-face relational modes; through responding to telephone calls and their redirection using speaking and listening modes; and finally, through the receipting of payments received by mail which involves a much more distal formal of communication.. However, despite being designated as occupying a position of level three clerical-administrative trainee, these interactions are constituted in ways that are peculiar to this shire council site with minimal matches with the units that comprise the level three standards listed in Table 1.

For example, the maintenance of council records with respect to payments received is a major activity for Natalie yet the tasks that she performs could not be categorised as the assemblage of new files, the identification and processing of inactive and dead files and the recording of document movements, elements of competency that comprise Unit INF301, *Maintain information records system to ensure its integrity*. Furthermore, because this maintenance is performed using a sophisticated data base, she simultaneously performs TEC303, the maintenance of *computer files* Similarly, in accomplishing this activity, Natalie *maintain(s) daily financial records* and monitor(s) cash control for accounting purposes which are the units of competence comprising FIN301 and FIN302. However, paradoxically, only two of the eight elements of competency that support these units, enter cash transactions into cash journals and receive and document payments/taking, are undertaken in this process, with the former only occurring the case of payments received by mail. Finally, while Natalie indeed use(s) the advanced functions of a range of office equipment to complete daily tasks, in this case an intra-office data base software program and a printer, there are no elements identified in the standards to indicate the actual level of skill that is required to complete this activity successfully.

To provide a measure of detail showing the complexity of skill that is demonstrated by Natalie, the transcript of the conversation that accompanied the receipt of a payment on 20 August 1998 between Natalie and a customer (Figure 2) and an artefact in the form of the main on-line cash receipting screen on which Natalie enters data (Figure 3) are presented. The transcript is one of four that are available in this early phase of my data collection and was not chosen over the others for any specific reason. A glossary of the transcription codes that are used (Psathas, 1995) can be found in Appendix A.

Figure 2: An interaction between a Level 3 trainee and a customer centring on the payment of a rate account

(T is the trainee; C is the customer)

1 T hi! how are you going?
2 C hello
(1.0)
3 T (receives cheque and rate notice from customer))
thank you
(1.0)
thanks
(8.0) (trainee begins processing payment)
4 C that go in the draw will it!
5 T it certainly will
6 C yeh about when when does that go in it
7 T um (.) tomorrow's the last day=
8 C =oh (.) yeh
(1.0)
9 T (so) you've got in in time
(22.0 ((interruption)))
10 C you want me to initial that where I ((points to cheque))
(2.0)
11 T oh yes please [if you don't mind] ((hands back the cheque))
12 C [where I had]
(1.0)
°an eight there where I changed it to a nine (.) had nine there and I changed it to an eight
13 T yep and if you could just put a signature there [down at the bottom]
14 C [O::H GEE] THAT'S THE MAIN THING
thing
(3.0)
15 T thank you very much wouldn't want anyone else claiming it ha ha
16 C thank you
17 T did you want your receipt at all
(2.0)
18 C A:h=
19 T =yeh I won't be a moment
(3.0)
20 C not the first time I forgot to sign anything
(19.0)
21 T there we go ((hands over the receipt))
22 C thank you
23 T thanks very much bye bye
24 C goodbye

In the four transcripts of talk relating to the receipting of rates, it is Natalie, rather than the customer, who opens the transactions. This practice can be found in other studies of institutional talk, for example in doctor-patient interactions (Silverman, 1987) the doctor invariably begins the actual consulting event. Similarly, it is Natalie who introduces the conclusion to the interaction in line 21, by handing the customer his receipt.

In contrast to the leadtaking role assumed by the trainee, the customer introduces the two topics that constitute most of the talk that accompanies this activity. Turns 4 to 9 deal with the issue of inclusion of early rate payers' names in a raffle with the prize of a week's holiday at a beachside resort. In turn 4, in a non-specific language choice of "that" as in "that go in the draw", the customer questions whether he is eligible to win this prize. The trainee confirms his eligibility in a positive way through the use of the modal "certainly". However, the customer requests further confirmation in turn 6, although this time his query focuses on the moment of entry. The trainee's response to this information seems unusual. It might have been expected that she would align this moment with her processing of the payment but instead she indicates that indeed, he has a day to spare. He indicates that

he understand this information and the trainee concludes the sequence relating to this topic with the definite statement, "you've got in in time".

In this fragment, the trainee is performing a wider role than the recipient of a rate payment. She is playing a part in ensuring that an institutional money-making venture is being played out in a way that is seen as legitimate by participants and of possible benefit to them.

In the second sequence of talk initiated by the customer, from turns 10 to 16 and concluded in turn 20, a different institutional objective is met. Firstly, he has omitted to initial changes to the cheque that he is presenting and he enquires whether the trainee "wants" it initialled. This is a noteworthy choice of term as presumably both know that the cheque will not be acceptable without such initials. The trainee, in fact, is very polite in her response. She uses "please" and then follows this with an even more suppliant expression in "if you don't mind". However, she is a little more definite in turn 13 where she requests "a signature down at the bottom" although she prefaces this with a repetition of the conditional form, "if" and the modal "just" which continue to define her relationship with the customer.

In the next stage of this topic, beginning in turn 13, it is Natalie who initiates the request for further action by the customer, that is the signing of the cheque, to ensue that the payment process duly occurs. For his part, the customer seems to be criticising himself for this omission. This is evident in his loud response, his use of the particle "oh" and its collocation with the colloquial "gee". This criticism continues in turn 20, while Natalie is organising his receipt. In addition to this action, the customer indicates that he understands the purpose for Natalie's request for his signature in "that's the main thing". This is taken up by Natalie in the following turn where she provides a scenario of what might result if the signature on the cheque was missing. That is, some other customer might claim the payment.

In addition to conversing appropriately on these two topics, Natalie is engaged in physically meeting the institutional demands of the receipting of rate payments. To achieve this, she enters data on a screen similar to that reproduced in Figure 3 below. This is by no means a simple process. As in other data entry tasks undertaken by clerical-administrative trainees (Kelly & Foley, 1998), a number of decisions are required at various points and these are made with the knowledge that the action of rate receipting is situated within a wider system that involves other council staff and has inherent checks and balances. If Natalie does not receipt accurately and according to council conventions and financial conventions, certain ramifications will unequivocally ensue.

Figure 3: On-Line Cash Receipting Screen

```
NMCASH              On-Line Cash Receipting          Function :   LN
Ledger Number       :                              Rates Suspense Account
Assessment Number   :

                                                  Amount Paid YTD  :   $
Name    :                                         Discount YTD     :   $
Address :                                         Total Arrears    :   $
                                                  Total Current    :   $
                                                  Total O/S        :   $
                                                  Discnt Available :   $
                                                  Balance To Pay   :   $

To Pay                :            Discount  :

Amt. Tendered (Cash)  :                        Cheque Details
Amt. Tendered (Cheque) :                Drawer :
Rounding              :                 Bank   :
Change                :                 Branch :
                                        State  :


Confirm <Y>:
```

Discussion

When agreements are signed which recognise the employment of clerical staff as trainees, there is an acceptance that the competencies that define the traineeship will be met. There is however, another understanding prevailing; that these competencies match the core tasks performed by the trainees. This is not necessarily the case.

In Natalie's case, the workplace assessor faces two dilemmas. While a match is possible between a number of competency units and the activities that constitute her position, this match is very general. The level of complexity of Natalie's work is not recognised in the competency statements and as a result, her work cannot be documented and is therefore, devalued. A number of researchers (*What's in a word?*, 1992; Jackson, 1994) have commented that this lack of recognition of the sophistication of women's work is common and has been particularly characteristic of office work. It would appear that this situation is continuing.

The second dilemma occurs when the standards contain competencies that are not inherent in the work role of trainees. For example, Natalie does not "draft routine correspondence in response to a need or request" While she indeed responds to myriad needs and requests, these responses do not usually take the form of "drafts". As another example, she is not required to "design and develop documents, reports and worksheets". In response to this situation, there are two choices that workplace assessors can take. They can ignore these extraneous competencies or alternatively, tasks can be set which relate to these competencies, the successful completion of which will provide evidence of competence. The first option is not really available because if this position were taken, it would be impossible to justify the awarding of a level three certification which assumes comprehensive competence. The second option may be perceived as sensible or nonsensensical, depending on one's ideological position with respect to standards.

Historically, there has been a kind of canon, made explicit materially in communication textbooks (Beisler, Scheeres & Pinner, 1993; Dwyer, 1993) and workbooks, which business teachers have reproduced. It is evident as well in the way the standards framework has been developed. For example, the writing of draft business correspondence in response to a need or request is a common topic in both business studies textbooks and in workbooks. Yet, very few of the seventeen trainees whom I observed in an earlier study of level three clerical-administrative trainees actually engaged in this activity (Kelly & Foley, 1998).

If authentic work practices are valued as the basis for the developing standards frameworks and for the selection of specific competencies, as is presumably the case, then it is imperative that there are further research projects that document these practices. I believe this is especially important in the clerical area where trainees are employed across all industries and increasingly use sophisticated digital technology that renders the compartmentalisation of conventional business subjects obsolete and demands skills that are not currently reflected in the standards documents.

Notes

1. A number of teachers provided personal lists with accompanying details of the diverse roles that they fill despite their official designation as "teachers" at an ACAL forum in Sydney in August 1998.

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APPENDIX A

Transcription notation (Psathas, 1995)

[ ]	simultaneous utterance
=	latching of utterances
(1.0)	timed intervals in seconds between and within utterances
(.)	untimed intervals within utterances of less than a second
(( ))	description
XYZ	loud delivery
°	soft delivery
:	sound stretch
?	rising intonation
underlining	stressed phonemes or words

Certificate I in Initial Adult Literacy And Numeracy (CIALN) multimedia student resources

Ron McGlynn

Introduction

Within the State of Victoria, Government developed accredited basic literacy courses, while catering to a wide range of student ability, do not offer any systematic, incremental formal recognition of student performance at the beginning literacy levels. Further, such courses do not contain any relevant State recognised initial literacy guidelines for teachers to follow. Until recently, teenage and adult learners wishing to develop initial literacy and numeracy skills were perceived as being left in an educational void.

The Certificate I in Initial Adult Literacy and Numeracy (CIALN), which comprises of two State accredited and Nationally recognised courses of study, was developed to address this discrepancy. These courses are now being used by a growing number of further education providers around Australia. Annual course evaluation results supplied by further education providers delivering the CIALN indicate a high level of provider satisfaction and approval for these courses.

CIALN further education providers have highlighted that there is an urgent need for the development of relevant multimedia initial literacy and numeracy student resources. To this end, a major 'Proof of Concept' for the future development of a comprehensive set of CIALN compatible multimedia student resources has recently been completed. Such resources will revolutionise the delivery of initial adult literacy studies throughout Australia. Finally, teachers working at these initial literacy levels may be released from the traditional intensive one to one support requirement, free to more readily facilitate student learning in the classroom. Further, for the first time in history, it will be feasible to undertake accredited initial adult literacy studies via a distance learning mode.

Basic literacy provision over the past decade

Australian Bureau of Statistics survey

According to the latest Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) survey (released in September 1997), Approximately 2.6 million people aged 15 - 74 have very poor literacy skills. That is, they could be expected to experience considerable difficulties in using many printed materials they would encounter in daily life.

Performing basic mathematical calculations may also pose a problem.

In 1991 the then Minister for Employment, Education and Training, John Dawkins stated, *Adult illiteracy in Australia is costing the nation at least $3.2 billion a year in lost productivity and is promoting and cementing social and economic inequity.* (ARIS, Information Sheet No.1 Adult Literacy)

Traditionally, the standard, content and delivery of basic literacy courses within Australia has varied from provider to provider. That is, as there have been no mandatory Government requirements to deliver 'accredited' basic literacy courses.

National surveys

In May 1993 the Australian Association of Adult and Community Education (AAACE) and the Conference of Senior Officers in Adult Education (CSOAE) undertook a national research project titled; Beyond the Ramp. This project related to developing a national AAACE policy for people with disabilities. The following points are part of the ' summary of responses' to the project survey questionnaire:

(a) There appears to be very little understanding by ACE providers of the 1992 Disability Discrimination Act, or of other Commonwealth and State anti-discrimination legislation.
(b) There is often a lack of effective networking between ACE providers and organisations which provide services to people with disabilities.
(c) Evidence indicates that there is a general lack of knowledge by ACE providers of ways of meeting the support needs of people with disabilities.

In July 1992 the Schonell Special Education Research Center, the University of Queensland, the Queensland Division of Intellectual Disability Services, and the Division of Adult Education, Access and Equity (BEVFET) published the results of a project titled: " A Survey of Adult Literacy Provision for People with Intellectual Disabilities". Amongst the many observations cited in the 'executive project summary', the following points are pertinent:

(a) The literature indicates that there is a need for curriculum planning for this population. Programs that are well-organised and goal-directed are essential.
(b) The findings indicated that few respondents followed a planned curriculum. The lack of planning and curriculum design should be of concern.

State and Federal legislation

State and Federal legislation relating to people with disabilities implies that the adult education system needs to be fully inclusive, that is, to ensure that people with disabilities have the same opportunities as other citizens in the community.

The early 1990s heralded in a move toward the delivery of a number of new Government developed accredited basic literacy courses in Australia. However, the delivery of accredited basic literacy courses is still not mandatory.

In the State of Victoria, the Certificates of General Education for Adults (CGEA) and the Certificate I in Work Education (CWE) are now the most commonly used accredited basic literacy courses. While both the CGEA and CWE adequately address the academic needs of a wide range of adult students, neither of these courses offer any systematic, incremental formal recognition of student performance at the beginning literacy/numeracy levels. Further, these courses do not contain any relevant State recognised initial literacy/numeracy guidelines for teachers to follow.

The CGEA level one literacy learning outcomes relate to reading and writing in complete sentences. Achieving these CGEA learning outcomes within a reasonable time may be quite difficult for students who are currently not able to; recognise signs and symbols, match words to corresponding pictures, identify all the letters of the alphabet, spell simple words, sound words out phonetically, recognise whole words, identify verbs/nouns and parts of a sentence or read and write a simple phrase.

While the CWE entry requirements seem to suggest that this course is accessible to and designed for people with learning disabilities, its first literacy learning outcomes relate to reading and writing short reports and taking minutes of meetings.

People studying at the initial literacy/numeracy levels may literally wait years before receiving any formal State credential for learning outcomes achieved within the CGEA or CWE courses.

Recent Government literacy directives

In November 1997, the Hon Phil Honeywood, MP Minister for Tertiary Education and Training Victoria launched the Government's new Managing Diversity Policy and principles which are:

> *Valuing diversity, Access to affective participation in vocational and further education, An outcomes focus on performance, Responsiveness to clients with special needs, Reporting achievement, Managing diversity - as a corporate responsibility*
> Multiple Choice, 1997)

In late 1997 Dr Kemp, Federal Minister for Employment, Education and Training was quoted as stating:

> *A lot of focus has been on literacy in the early years of schooling, but unemployed people currently looking for jobs have got significant deficiencies in literacy skills. Literacy courses are important in the overall job market. We want to make sure, for example, that the successful tenderers for the Commonwealth Employment Services (CES) know where the effective providers of literacy training are.*
> (Australian newspaper, Herald Sun report)

Certificate I in Initial Adult Literacy and Numeracy (CIALN)

While the introduction of accredited literacy courses within Victoria benefited many adult learners, those studying at the initial stages may be perceived as being left in an educational void. The Certificate I in Initial Adult Literacy and Numeracy (CIALN) was developed privately by McGlynn Educational Media (M.E.M.) in an effort to address this discrepancy. The CIALN was accredited with the State Training Board Victoria in July 1996 and is now also on the National Register of Accredited Courses.

The CIALN has been designed to support teenage and adult learners with little or no current formal education and those with a learning or intellectual disability who may experience difficulties in one or more of the following areas:

- Recognising words and items such as Health & Safety signs, Compic symbols and the like
- Reading, writing and communicating simple words, phrases or sentences
- Handling money and performing simple monetary transactions
- Performing basic survival level mathematical calculations

On completion of the CIALN participants will possess the essential literacy and numeracy skills required for coping with everyday life in the general community or workplace. CIALN graduates are also well prepared to undertake higher level literacy courses such as the CGEA and the CWE. However, in practice many CIALN level students may be concurrently developing both CIALN and CGEA/CWE level literacy and numeracy skills.

The CIALN has received commendations from:

- State Training Board Victoria
- Office of Training and Further Education (OTFE) Victoria
- Adult, Community and Further Education (ACFE) Board Victoria
- Department of Education, Victoria
- Barwon South Western Regional Council of ACFE
- Karingal Inc. (one of Victoria's most largest and progressive community based organisations for people with disabilities)

CIALN multimedia student resources

CIALN licensees have highlighted that there is an urgent need for the development of a comprehensive set of relevant initial literacy/numeracy multimedia student resources.

Teaching students at the initial literacy levels requires smaller class sizes and intensive one to one support. However, ever reducing Government funding is making it increasingly difficult for many further education providers to adequately resource this level of education. Further, many students studying at these initial literacy/numeracy levels are totally dependant on teacher support which in turn dramatically limits the individual student's ability to study independently at home throughout the week. Even within the best resourced classroom environment students must often wait for extended periods to receive individual support. It has been suggested that if a time and motion study was undertaken within a two hour once a week initial literacy class the actual maximum one to one support that can be offered may be as little as approximately 15 minutes.

In recognition of these barriers to quality education, M.E.M. gained approval for a business investment loan to undertake a 'proof of concept' for the development of an extensive range of CIALN compatible multi media student resources. The Victorian Multi Media 21 Fund has acted as the investment group for stage one. This Fund was established by the Victorian Government to stimulate the production of multi media products within Victoria for the private business sector. The Fund will only invest in projects which demonstrate a significant potential benefit to Victoria and Australia at large. The Fund must have confidence that the project will successfully reach the production stage.

The multimedia resources to be developed will correspond to the CIALN accredited frameworks, will be of the highest quality and specifically designed for use by teenage and adult participants.

Such resources also have the exciting capacity to be delivered as a form of distance learning. Further education providers may establish distance learning coordinators who could initially instruct students in how to use the CIALN compatible resources then students would be free to study at home or via general access to computer lab. facilities as currently offered by many further education providers. Students could periodically meet with their relevant distance education coordinator for additional support or for formal assessment purposes.

However, ideally these resources would be used by students in a classroom environment as an enrichment of current teaching practice. As mentioned, in this scenario, the student would have the added advantage of not being solely dependant on the teacher and could readily continue with studies at home or via a computer lab. facility. Therefore, presumably, learning would be vastly accelerated at these levels and learning outcomes achieved more readily.

About The Author

Ron McGlynn is the Coordinator of an adult literacy program which has traditionally catered to approximately 55 people with a mild, moderate to severe intellectual disability. The program is now based at a local Institute of TAFE. Ron has been the coordinator of this adult literacy program for the past 12 years but also has extensive regular classroom experience. He is well qualified in the area of adult special education and has presented a number of educational papers relating to adults with learning disabilities at both State and National Conferences. Ron is an active ACE committee of management member, principal officer of M.E.M and author of the Certificate I in Initial Adult Literacy and Numeracy courses of study.

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Communication matters: towards self management of communication needs: a best practice case study in a remote mine site

Cathrena McRae

Introduction

This paper reports on a project funded under the Demonstrating Best Practice in VET National Project awarded to the Workplace Communication Unit at the Tropical North Queensland Institute of TAFE in Far North Queensland in 1997.

The project was a case study of a successful WELL funded literacy project delivered to Red Dome Gold mine (Nuigini Mining) in remote north west Queensland in 1996.

The ANTA funded project produced a "how -to" booklet, video, and research report for use by those who are searching for better ways of delivering communication training in the workplace. The products document the experience of those involved - that of the trainer, the managers, the tutors and the students. The products were developed to meet the needs of a range of audiences including training providers, human resource personnel, the mining industry and VET sector researchers.

Best Practice in communication training provides the quality design, development and delivery that best meets the client's needs. Through interviewing a representative sample of participants and managers it became strongly evident that this case study had to encompass a number of elements to adequately describe what had been Best Practice. It became obvious that this program was Best Practice because of a number of inter-relating factors: the product itself, how it was implemented, the philosophical and physical conditions existing in the workplace, and the response of those involved to these factors. The self management of literacy needs emerged as the underlying principle for the design and delivery of the program.

Best Practice was by no means considered Perfect Practice by any of the stakeholders in the project. It became important to document the dilemmas, the unresolved issues, and the suggestions for improvement made by those who knew the program best.

The Context

This worksite offers particular challenges in terms of the effective delivery of literacy training. Red Dome Gold Mine is situated in remote outback QLD, 200 kilometres inland from Cairns. It is a 24 hour operation with twelve hour shifts and rotating rosters of 7 days on site and 7 days off. Prior to the delivery of the WELL program, the workforce had been downsized and during the delivery of the WELL project almost all of the 120 staff were employed on a fly in out basis from Cairns on the coast and Mareeba on the Atherton Tablelands.

> *The hardest part is just scheduling the people - the flights, getting the enterprise teacher in on the best possible day to see the maximum number of people. But whatever you arrange can be thrown in disarray within minutes of the plane arriving.*
> Nigel Brown, Human Resource Development Coordinator - HRDC

In terms of training, Red Dome has two inter-related goals. Firstly, it aims to develop the inhouse expertise necessary to provide as much of its own training as possible. Secondly, it plans to integrate as much of the training as practicable into existing work practices. Consequently, a company priority is the development of its employees' training skills.

At the time the WELL project was implemented, a new career path program called the Personal Development Program (PDP) had been operating for a little over a year. Introduced as part of the enterprise bargaining agreement, the PDP proved to be a major departure from the previous remuneration system.

In contrast to the old system which was based solely on the acquisition of functional skills, the PDP recognised and rewarded a far broader range of skills. Functional skills formed just one component. Where previously multi skilling may have meant accumulating skills in operating the various machines, multi skilling in the new environment means developing competency across a range of life skills that are generic to all work activity. The life skills that form the basis of the PDP are based on the seven Mayer key competencies. Assessment aims to be on the job and ongoing with the individual's work practices matched against established assessment criteria. Performance reviews or appraisals on a yearly or if necessary, a more frequent basis, constitute the formal evaluation of an employee's progress and aspirations.

Management and workers had long recognised the need for literacy training and the introduction of the PDP exacerbated this need. The HRDC described the impact of the PDP on the workplace:

> *In the former program, you need not have written a word hardly to get to the top. So there was no challenge there, there was no need. With the PDP, the need is there.*

The WELL Project

The communication program was designed to meet the needs of low level literacy students, develop a pool of employees skilled in literacy training and respond to other communication needs as they arose. It was delivered by the Enterprise Based Teacher and the peer tutors that she trained in the initial stages of the project. The focus on the training of tutors was consistent with the company's long term goal to manage as much of its training as possible.

The choice of an accredited tutor training curriculum provided the workplace with the opportunity to provide formal qualifications for the tutors for their training and tutoring expertise, offered the tutors increased status and recognition for their skills by the workplace and offered the workplace the potential to integrate the formal skills of the tutors into the Personnel Development Program.

The enterprise based teacher (EBT) spent 2-3 days a week on site. She promoted the program, analysed company and individual communication needs, interviewed prospective participants, and delivered the training. The EBT provided training to two different clientele - to volunteers who wished to complete the requirements of a VETEC adult literacy training course and thus become accredited literacy tutors, and to volunteers who wished to improve their communication skills.

The 100 hour tutor training course comprised approximately 45 hours classroom instruction conducted on a one day/fortnight basis over a three month period and 55 hours of face-to-face tutoring. Using criteria such as compatibility and practical considerations, the EBT matched the tutors with co-workers who required assistance in literacy skills. Once the tutors and tutees had been matched, the EBT's involvement with the peer tutoring component was to monitor the process and offer encouragement, support and when necessary, expertise.

Employees who were not matched with a tutor became the students of the EBT. The more common requests from these students were assistance with report and memo writing and compiling resumes. Most of this work was on a 1-1 basis as release time difficulties made group work almost impossible to organise.

The Research

The case study was documented the year after the program had officially terminated. Although written data in the form of evaluations and reports had already been collected by the EBT, the richest data was the spoken word. To construct a realistic representation of the lived experience of this program, the stories of as many participants as possible were told and recorded. In all, seventeen people were

interviewed individually. They were the program manager from the Tropical North Queensland Institute of TAFE who negotiated the course, the enterprise based teacher who delivered the program, the Red Dome Human Resources Development Co-odinator (HRDC) who was the key on site person involved in the program, the general manager, two departmental heads, four tutors and seven students. The first series of interviews were intensive in-depth discussions with the key informants - the program manager, the trainer and the HRDC. Data from the key informants provided the background necessary to contextualise the responses from the other participants. With the assistance of the HRDC, interviews were arranged with participants at Red Dome. Interview schedules indicating the style of questions that would be asked were sent in advance to all the employees who were willing to discuss the program. In reality, the type of questions asked was strongly influenced by the issues that had been discussed by previous informants and by the interest areas of the individual.

The Relationships

The congruence of a number of key factors contributed to the development of Best Practice at Red Dome. Underpinning these factors were the learning partnerships that were developed between key stakeholders in the project. These relationships were the partnerships between the company and the training provider, between management and their workforce, between the Enterprise Based Teacher and the employees and finally the learning partnerships between the employees and their workmates which constituted the peer tutoring. Here tutors recall their experiences when working with students:

> *I can remember one guy coming in and the perspiration was pouring off him and he was shaking. And he said 'I'm not hot - just embarrassed'. ... You could have lost him at that stage if you didn't show a lot of patience and interest in him as a person.*

> *I learned to move along at his pace not mine. In all the other instructing type jobs I've been involved in, I controlled the programs. With this it's different. It all depends on the person you're working with. You have to get to know him, get to know what he wants to achieve ... I didn't get much feedback - he was fairly reserved. Just had to use my judgement. Read the signs and go along while he was willing, coach him while he was fading, and don't hassle him too much when it was going cold.*

The Outcomes

Over 30% of the 120 employees were involved in the program as tutors or students. Six employees became accredited literacy tutors providing training to six fellow workers and a further 25 students underwent training with the EBT.

Improvement in participant literacy skills was reported by both students and managers. In addition, trained adult literacy tutors now provided the on-site pool of expertise in communication training that could be accessed either formally or informally by the work force as the need arose. One manager observed:

> *One fellow who works for us and who has recently become an acting team leader had literacy skills very much below average. From just the pure functional literacy skill point of view, I've seen his skills come on in leaps and bound. He can do adequate team leader sheets and he reads them out at daily meetings where previously he would have been scared stiff to do that. He can now fill out an incident investigation form to an acceptable standard and do other written tasks. Previously he would not have been able to do or have the confidence to do that.*

Increased company morale was also reported by managers and unexpected consequences became as important or even more important than the intended outcomes. A maths tutoring program initiated by a metallurgist with the full support of his manager and attracting a dozen participants over a twelve

month period was just one example. The HRDC summarises the impact of the program as follows:

> *The value to me of the WELL program was not so much the WELL program itself but that it was a bit of a catalyst and it got people up and taking on a bit of learning - taking on something a little bit different.*

The research identified a number of key factors which contributed to the development of Best Practice at Red Dome. The introduction of the Personnel Development Program into the workplace highlighted the need for literacy training in the workplace. The existing workplace culture of the worksite provided a nurturing environment for the development and delivery of the project. There was a strong commitment to training from the managers in the workplace and these managers continued to support the program as it evolved. The use of a steering committee with representatives from all stakeholders to manage the project ensured continued feedback from all levels of the workplace. The skills of the Enterprise Based Teacher employed to deliver the project was also identified as a key issue in the success of the program. The EBT displayed a high level of skills in communication and project management as well as the expected training expertise. When this student was interviewed he made the following comment regarding his relationship with Sue:

> *Sue was an excellent teacher. She gained your confidence, you could talk to her you know. I felt good. I felt comfortable with her.*

Unexpectedly the remote location of the mine assisted with the implementation of the program:

> *The fact that you had a captive audience in a way probably helped a bit as well. There were people on site after work - there wasn't a real lot to do, if you didn't want to go and have a drink. If you're in your room you might as well be achieving something, learning a skill*

The recruitment of volunteers for all aspects of the program including the steering committee, tutors and students ensured that participants were genuinely interested in the program.

Conclusion

The purpose of this paper was to report on a Best Practice case study of workplace communication training delivery. It was documented for two readerships: training providers including their trainers and teachers; and the enterprises themselves, especially their human resource personnel. The case study has illustrated that fundamental to the success of the program was the collaboration between the trainer and the company.

At one level, this case study is about how a combination of enterprise based teacher and trained peer tutors was effective in delivering communication training at a small isolated mine site controlled by production schedules, shift arrangements and minimum staffing. At another, it is about the processes and elements that produced this winning combination.

If the program is to be packaged as a model of Best Practice, the case study has shown that the model must be about process as well as product; people as well as place.

The impact of the project speaks most powerfully in the voices of the students:

> *I have improved. I'm not real good, I'll admit to that, but if someone asked me now to write out a works order or write out a bit of a report I can quite comfortably go ahead and do it which I wasn't before. Silly little words used to confuse me. I can spell bigger words, and I'm better at spelling all round. It's given me confidence really.*

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2. The communication training program itself was implemented through the utilisation of funding from the Workplace English Language and Literacy Program (WELL). WELL is funded by the Federal government and is administered by DEETYA.

Copies of the video, booklet and research project documenting the 12 month workplace communication training program developed by Red Dome Gold Mine and the Tropical North Queensland Institute of TAFE may be ordered from Cathrena McRae, Workplace Communication Unit, Tropical North Queensland Institute of TAFE PMB1 Cairns 4870; Ph. (07) 40422611; fax: (07) 40422608; email: Cathrena.McRae@dtir.qld.gov.au

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Language literacy and numeracy in the entertainment industry: enhancing training packages

Celia Moon

CREATE Australia is the national industry training advisory body for people working in the arts and cultural industries. The diversity of the cultural industries is reflected in the breadth of their professional practice:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Arts
- Community Cultural Development
- Design and Architecture
- Film Television Video and Radio
- Libraries
- Multimedia
- Museums and Art Galleries
- Music
- Performing Arts
- Visual Arts and Crafts
- Writing Publishing and Journalism
- Zoos and Botanic Gardens

There is a highly diverse workforce within the cultural industries. At one end of the spectrum there are high level professionals with excellent language, literacy and numeracy proficiency. At the other end of the spectrum, literacy and numeracy skills are low, for example among people working as contemporary musicians, as front of house staff, in cinemas, (ticket collectors, ushers, projectionists) sound, audio-visual and lighting technicians and backstage crew working in theatres, other live venues and film and television. As well, a high proportion of people from non-English speaking backgrounds work in community radio broadcasting and community cultural development. All jobs within the community cultural development sector involve working with culturally diverse communities. There are a significant number of people from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander backgrounds working in this sector many of whom have limited or interrupted formal education.

Almost 50% of people in the cultural industries have no post-school qualifications. On top of this, major cultural initiatives such as the Sea of Change and Festival of Dreaming, the frequency of international companies touring and government policies in relation to cultural tourism have increased involvement of people from diverse cultural backgrounds and demands for cross-cultural communication.

CREATE's workplace communications project evolved from the need identified in the cultural industries to address language literacy and numeracy to ensure that national training packages are accessible and that they explicitly address language literacy and numeracy requirements of the industry. WELL funding for this year assisted us to identify the language literacy and numeracy implications of existing competency standards in the entertainment industry (people working in live venues) and particularly the implications for access at the lower AQF levels (1-4). Funding has also enabled us to develop learning resources and trainers and assessors guides to specifically address the language literacy and numeracy needs of the industry.

Step One: Selecting the streams for consultation

The first step was to look at the draft national competency standards and analyse what reading, writing, oral communications and numeracy tasks might be involved.

Having identified areas where there might be language, literacy (including computer literacy), numeracy and cultural awareness implications and particularly where it appeared these had not already been adequately addressed, we determined to select a number of streams for industry consultation and to focus intially in the technical areas. The following streams were selected:

- Stage Management
- Audiovisual
- Sound
- Lighting
- Technical General
- Front of House
- Communications
- Industry Knowledge
- Cinema Projection
- Costume
- Makeup
- Occupational Health and Safety
- Sets and Props Manufacture
- Staging
- Technical Management

The issue of whether to integrate language literacy and numeracy into existing standards or to develop stand alone standards took some time to resolve. Our original intention had been to include the possibility of developing generic standards to apply across all cultural industries. A review of current workplace communications literature and discussions with literacy experts and industry all strongly recommended building language, literacy and numeracy requirements into existing competencies rather than creating separate competency standards for language literacy and numeracy.

Step 2: Planning industry consultations

In planning for industry consultations we followed the steps laid out in ANTA's *Workplace Communications* guide. A list of questions to ask focus groups was compiled following the guide's ideas about how language literacy and numeracy content can be drawn out in initial workplace and industry consultations as a starting point.

Preparing a Questionnaire Template for Industry Consultations

A questionnaire format was devised to facilitate the consultation process and act as guide for focus group sessions. The questionnaire was designed to tease out the reading, writing, oral communication, numeracy and cultural awareness requirements that lie behind the technical competencies expressed in elements and performance criteria.

We decided to conduct only face to face consultations in groups of two to five, to walk people through the process and to ensure a richness of data was gathered. This data would not have been gathered if the questionnaire had been distributed and people asked to respond in writing. Considerable discussion was generated by the group interaction in the process of working through the standards together, especially provoking comparisons about the different ways things are done in different venues. The questionnaire was a useful tool for facilitators to thoroughly address each step and systematically document industry responses during consultation sessions, without making the process too long or onerous and preventing a lot of backtracking at later stages.

Step 3: The consultation process

Whilst we had determined to integrate language, literacy and numeracy rather than develop separate standards, we generally asked respondents to indicate whether we should develop separate standards or integrate language, literacy and numeracy into existing standards and they were insistent that language literacy and numeracy be built into existing standards. This was particularly pertinent in the area of cultural awareness where there was an existing core unit in the communications stream. The industry representatives were very clear that while it was important that this separate standard remain, in addition, it was crucial to address cultural awareness in individual standards as it is absolutely central to some, but not to all areas of work. It was even suggested at one stage, that reference to cross cultural communication appear in every performance criteria.

During consultation sessions we gathered descriptions of communication systems which in the entertainment industry can be quite complex. Backstage crews, for example can have a complex light cueing systems comprising a series of coloured lights, that they have to respond to. Technicians, performers and stage crew all have to know what each colour means, the sequence of light cues and the timing between cueing systems. Lighting and sound technicians rely on receiving cues via their headphones or 'cans'. This requires quite highly attuned listening skills as they have to be able to select their own cues from the fifty or so cues bombarding their ears at the same time. Gathering specific information such as this was vital for the re-writing of competency standards to ensure that language literacy and numeracy was comprehensively rather than casually or incidentally included. At the same time, anecdotes and actual workplace documents, such as floor plans, seating plans, stock order forms and inventories were gathered for later inclusion in learners' guides.

Step 4: Integrating feedback from consultations

Given the scant information that had been gathered in consultation with industry from prior sessions, the wealth and detail of information that emerged during the LLN consultations was in some ways surprising. It indicated the need to specifically and explicitly draw out these issues in industry consultations. In many areas language literacy and numeracy were identified as having huge Occupational Health and Safety implications, even though previously this information hadn't been forthcoming. For example if technicians get the power calculations wrong they can blow up the equipment, if not the venue. Stage managers need to calculate the timing of people and objects 'travelling' on and off stage, for placement of backstage quick-change areas and props. Set builders need to calculate spatial dimensions for transfer of sets from the design sketches, to the rehearsal room or performance venues, the dimensions of which will vary for every new venue. If they get it wrong, or they haven't done the calculations on the size of the loading dock or access corridors, they might find that they have build a set that can't actually fit into the venue. This is not only costly, it is also disastrous. Lighting technicians need to understand the angles of light refraction for rigging of lanterns so the light hits the stage in the right spot, or else the performers will be acting in the dark. All consultations emphasised the absolute centrality of oral communication skills, to all technical areas of the entertainment industry.

The level of detailed information gathered in the consultations has enabled us to comprehensively map all the writing, reading and interpreting, speaking and listening and mathematical tasks required for the industry. These have been incorporated into approximately seventy standards and into the trainers and assessors guide developed as part of this project.

Checklists for trainers and assessors are being developed with advice on integrating LLN requirements in training and assessment, identifying LLN requirements in standards and learning resources and ensuring they match the level required for the task.

Step 5: Developing Learners' Guides

The learners' guide *Working in a Culturally Diverse Environment* was developed from comments and examples gathered during consultations. The resource is linked to the core Communications standard *Work in a Socially Diverse Environment*. This guide was developed first in response to the general consensus that cultural sensitivity was an absolute priority for the industry. We heard the tale for

example of how a male trainee had been sent by his anglo-Australian female stage manager to check the Japanese female lead's dressing room, prior to the opening performance by an overseas group. The American female director was furious and the show almost didn't go on. To a Japanese performer, as was explained later, her dressing room is synonymous with her bedroom, a very private, personal space. From the point of view of the Japanese lead, her dressing room had been violated. In another scenario an Australian lighting director was working with his American counterpart to get the lights plotted for a touring show. They only had a few days to do it. However, they suffered one delay after the other as the technical terminology each of them used was completely different. They weren't talking the same language and simply couldn't understand each other.

We researched the feasibility of producing a CD rom to address language, literacy and numeracy in the entertainment industry and saw some very exciting examples. Given the emphasis on visual and auditory acuity in the entertainment industry, an interactive CD rom would be the ideal learning resource in this area, both conceptually and in its practical application. We discovered however, that the cost and the timeframe that such a product would entail was prohibitive. So whilst we are still pursuing the idea of producing a CD rom in the future, for this current project we have opted for a combination of print-based resources and audio-cassettes, to reflect the strong emphasis on auditory skills in many of the technical areas of the industry.

In developing the resources we are taking a highly visual approach. For example, a series of worksite-specific photographs taken for CREATE will be included in new resources. They will also include the visual and documentary materials we have gathered from industry worksites and websites. These materials include illustrations, training materials, diagrams of equipment, floor plans, emergency procedures, set designs, induction manuals and occupational health and safety materials.

We grappled with how to include language, literacy and numeracy activities for those that need it, without making an integrated learning resource unnecessarily bulky or irrelevant to those who didn't need the extra focus on language, literacy or numeracy elements. As a result we have decided to take a three-pronged approach. Where there are existing resources, we are developing trainers guides for each stream linked to the original learners resources (for example by the use of icons) to direct trainers/learners to the separate guide for additional activities that focus on the language literacy or numeracy requirements for that unit. These guides focus on the elements common to all standards in the stream, and thus avoid repetition in individual learning resources.

Secondly we are suggesting ways of integrating language literacy and numeracy elements into existing guides and where current activities ask, for example, for written responses at a level beyond that required for the task we are recommending other options for delivery or assessment.

Thirdly we are working jointly with the learning resource developer for the remaining streams of the entertainment training package to integrate language, literacy and numeracy elements into new resources as they develop. All these points are re-iterated in the separate trainers and assessors guides and will be reinforced through practical sessions for training package developers.

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"They don't have to think, we've got managers": The fine line between "workplace communications skills" and "literacy at work"

Irena Morgan-Williams

Introduction: "They don't need to think, we've got managers"

Communication in the workplace in enabling the successful operation of the business by the people, is the PURPOSE for being literate to the standard required in the job. "Literacy in the workplace" is being technically capable of using literacy/numeracy skills to accomplish specific tasks.

When one focuses on a workplace literacy need, it can be easy to miss the purpose of the skill requirement. The improved ability of the individual to "read or write or numerate or speak or listen or learn" are the mechanics of being a participator in the workplace communication stream – participating as needed or desired using the complement of technical skills as required.

The gaining of literacy skills is a means to the communication and not an end in itself.

When the workplace demands change, the individual who is able to "read" the signs of change and adapt to them is the "most literate" worker. The current level of literacy/numeracy is not necessarily the indicator of a literacy need – rather it is the level of being literate in the workplace communication process that designates who needs "literacy in the workplace".

Industry and business identify that within the diversity of any business there are Core Issues that constantly emerge. It is in these issues that the workplace demands a level of "literacy".

Core Issues

- Communicative Skills for employers/employees or contractors – anyone involved in the business operation.
- Leadership & Teamwork Skills to maintain momentum, complete tasks/projects, develop the business further.
- Total Quality Management to enable benchmarking, to claim uniqueness, to prove performance, to continuously improve the business operation and communicative systems.
- Workplace Health and Safety to ensure the continuance of the business with the people who make that business operational, to provide a quality level of security for public and personnel in the conduct of the business.

Industry Requirements

Industry requires that workplace literacy training be

- Industry relevant
- Job skills and support specific
- Recognise existing skills of trainees
- Be delivered with minimal or no disruption to the trainees normal duties
- Be carried out on site

Developing programs for "workplace communication" rather than "literacy in the workplace" requires a lateral approach as well as an understanding of business systems and the vagaries of human nature in action.

The notion that, for example, one sick leave form is the same as the next is out-dated and incorrect, particularly in the case of someone with low levels of literacy. The form lay-out, colour and content all play an important role in the ability of people to make meaning. Skills training must, in the first instance, take into account what is happening in the workplace itself. Thus, while many workplaces these days employ different technologies within their business the "computer literateness" is not in the software but in the use of the concepts, an understanding of generic terms required and the transferability of "learning strategies" so that the trainee is able to continue the learning on specific systems irrespective of which technology is in use.

The Case Studies provided during the workshop will challenge the participants to devise program outlines that demand and demonstrate the fine line of "workplace communication" training that enables "them" to "think like managers".

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Literacy on the production line: enhancing career paths and utilising the workplace expertise of NESB women through training partnerships.

A panel presentation of a project conducted on site at Sheridan Australia.

Sonya Mezinec Project Coordinator Working Womens Centre

The report *Training for WHAT? Non English Speaking Background Women and the National Training Reform Agenda*[1] highlights that NESB women receive less vocational training, both on and off the job, than any other group. Research has identified a range of factors that contributed to this outcome including: inadequate availability of training; English language and literacy problems; discriminatory attitudes; training delivered at inappropriate times; inadequate staff relief; narrow approaches to training; non-recognition of skills; restrictive work organisation; trade and technical barriers; non integration of language and literacy training with vocational training.

Also identified were barriers to NESB women's training participation, including unduly high English language requirements for jobs and failure to recognise prior learning and cultural/linguistic skills.

The report provided strategic directions including recommendations for ANTA to fund demonstration projects in industries where NESB women have high representation, as well as promoting the integration of English language and literacy training into existing training.

The Working Women's Centre SA Inc applied for project funding to develop and pilot the provision of an integrated language and accredited vocational training program to women from diverse language backgrounds (Vietnamese, Chinese, Bosnian and Polish), employed by Sheridan Australia, within the Hemming Department. The project involved a partnership between the WWC, Sheridan Australia, Regency Institute of TAFE and the Textile, Clothing and Footwear Union SA (TCFU).

The Hemming Department at Sheridan was chosen for a number of reasons:

1. This is the largest single department at Sheridan and a high proportion of the 260 employees are NESB women. The production of high quality export product requires a highly skilled workforce, resulting in significant resources being directed to training in this department.
2. Sheridan management, particularly the HR manager, the Hemming Department manager and supervisors demonstrate a commitment to employee training and skill development.
3. Over the last 4 years a number of English language training programs had been conducted in conjunction with Regency Institute of TAFE.

Project Aims

- Demonstration of how some of the barriers to the effective utilisation of the skills of NESB women in Australian workplaces may be overcome.
- Improvement in the portability of knowledge and skills of NESB women in the Australian workforce.
- Improvement in the identification and utilisation of the knowledge of NESB women in Australian workplaces, thereby enhancing their productive diversity.
- Improvement in the representation of NESB women in vocational training.

[1] A report from the Non-English Speaking Background Ministerial Consultative Group on Vocational Education and Training prepared by Santina Bertone, Workplace Studies Centre for the Association of Non-English Speaking Background Women of Australia.

Selection Process

Twelve women from diverse cultural backgrounds were selected from approximately 25 volunteers to undertake Workplace Trainer: Category 1 training with English language support. The women were skilled operators in a variety of positions within the Hemming Department and many had previously assisted with training new employees in the tasks they perform.

The selection criteria were:

- a minimum level of language proficiency (ASLPR 1+)
- a high standard of work skill as assessed by the supervisor
- an indication of potential for developing the target competencies of this training.

The program was advertised within the Hemming department and briefing sessions were held for each shift. The number of workers who attended and volunteered reflected the enthusiasm for training opportunities among these NESB workers.

Project Outcomes The Trainees

Each participant achieved the competencies required by the course. They now have a nationally recognised certificate and formal recognition of their operator, training and language skills. Integrating English language support with the skills training meant that the English training was directly relevant to their work and therefore meaningful. The participants reported an improvement in their English language skills and demonstrated increased confidence and pride in their abilities as workplace trainers as well as in their normal work skills.

Many of their feedback comments reflect this.

> *"I have learnt how to train a trainee step by step and how to pass on my experience easily."*
> *"I have learnt about, task breakdown, flow charts, training session plans. All this is useful in my work."*
> *"Now I have more confidence to teach someone to do my job."*
> *"These skills will be very helpful in the future. I can use them for a lot of things that I really need in my job."*
> *"I got a lot more confidence about training someone, speaking English and understanding my job. From now on if anyone asks me about my job, or they want to learn how to operate the computer on the quilt AKAB I can train them much better than before."*

Project Outcomes The Company

The Hemming Department at Sheridan Australia now has a pool of trained, competent, highly skilled, and confident operators/workplace trainers from diverse language backgrounds available to assist with the training of employees to ensure standards of safety, quality and productivity are achieved and maintained.

Project Outcomes Lessons Learnt

The lessons learnt from this demonstration project will have relevance to the following:

- the further development of Workplace Trainer training for NESB women
- the effective utilisation of Workplace Trainer training in industries with a significant female NESB workforce
- the integration of language and literacy training with accredited vocational training for NESB women

At the time of writing this paper, the final report for the project is being drafted. It will include recommendations regarding the subsequent development and/or extension of this approach beyond the pilot department at Sheridan and within other enterprises with a significant workforce of NESB women. These recommendations will be of benefit to the project partners and others interested in issues concerning NESB women and integrated language, literacy and vocational training.

Some of these recommendations have already been formulated and are included at the end of this paper.

Karen Schultz Supervisor / Manager Hemming Department Sheridan Australia

The Sheridan Hemming Department has 200 employees and approximately 50 of these are NESB women. The department manufactures the finished bedlinen product before it is transferred into our Distribution Department and sent to stores all over the world.

Since our products are distributed worldwide to countries like the UK, Spain, the USA and Japan, our customers have their own range, style and size requirements so the volume which goes through the Hemming Department in one week could be as high as 50,000 pillowcases, 22,000 flat sheets, 12,000 fitted sheets, 10,000 quilt covers and 2,500 bedspreads. This volume can increase or decrease as sales and retail stocks fluctuate in the market place.

We work on a bonus system in our department and we need a properly structured training system so we can keep up production demand in a safe working manner while manufacturing our products to essential quality standards. Our employees therefore have to be multi-skilled and have basic speaking and literacy skills in English.

For the last 2 years we have worked on a training system using our own skilled operators to train our employees when we require. Through this process we have found that our skilled operators, although very competent in their jobs, needed specialist trainer skills in using correct methods and safety techniques. This lack of training skills has meant that our training has not been as effective as we would have liked.

This project has provided our department with skilled operators who are now also trainer skilled and have bilingual skills in the major on site languages. We now need to keep them motivated and committed by recognising and using these skills for our training needs, especially in dealing with fluctuating market demands in different areas of our department and in different production periods.

The course has been of real benefit to our employees. I have watched them grow in self confidence, self motivation and enthusiasm. They are much more confident about questioning and actively contributing. This is helping us develop a more effective team approach to cross skilling. I would recommend this sort of project to any company which wanted to develop their people for the future.

Yen Chau Project Trainee Hemming Department Sheridan Australia

I first heard about this program through my supervisor and went to an information session where they asked for volunteers to do the training. I decided I would volunteer because I wanted to improve my English and I wanted to know more about my job. I did not know I was going to be a trainer. The course was something different to other training I've done and more useful than what I thought. In fact it was fantastic. I did the right thing to volunteer. It was good to have the funding for this program to give workers the opportunity to do this training. There were a number of benefits for us.

The course of training helped us develop better English language skills and overcome some of our language difficulties. We gained a lot more understanding and confidence in our actual work, even though all of us have been in our jobs for quite a long time and are very familiar and sure of what we do. The course helped us feel more proud of our work as well as recognised and appreciated for our skills.

This course brought us together and now we work in a team more effectively. We talk to each other more easily and feel much more confident in instructing each other about our jobs. Our defence barriers are less, we are confident we can teach each other and are more relaxed about being taught. We are not so worried about offending someone by showing them the right method for a job.

One of the women in our group started with little English language and had difficulty talking about her job. Half way through she could already describe to other people what she did in her job and by the end of the course she was full of confidence and brave enough to train someone who did not know anything about her job.

Rob Leggatt Industry Trainer Regency Institute of TAFE

I have been involved in the delivery of training in industry for a number of years. Most of my work involves manufacturing and engineering companies where I run courses in Workplace Trainer / Assessor Category 1 and 2. Until now I have trained mixed groups only. This project was for me the first involving an all women NESB group.

There were a number of challenges and difficulties, however with the aid of each partner in the project team I was able to help the trainees. I found working with the language trainer in the training room very useful. We were able to share information and come up with alternative methodologies in response to trainee needs. The language trainer followed up language problems and checked the construction of the trainees' written assignments.

One of the biggest challenges for me was not being able to take for granted the trainees' understanding of English. Most of them had a good understanding of technical terms, names of equipment and processes to do with their own job, but had little or no knowledge of terminology related to training, assessment and evaluation, in other words the content of our training program. There was a need to rigorously consider what was essential to meet the content requirements of the course and the needs of the trainees and what was dispensable. At the same time we had to maintain a strong focus on effective communication.

The women were enthusiastic and diligent. As the course progressed they became more articulate and participated with more confidence. One of them stated that, for the first time she was able to talk about her job to her peers and her leading hand. I was pleased to see such a positive change in the women. They achieved competency in Workplace Trainer Category 1 and learned valuable language skills in the process.

I am happy to say that I also learned from the experience. I have a much clearer view of Cat 1 training and I gained a much better understanding of NESB issues and problems and the planning and discipline necessary to deliver effective training in this field.

Giuliana Otmarich Enterprise Based Language Trainer Sheridan Australia

Much of my enthusiasm for the project came from the prospect of working in partnership with a comprehensive range of stake holders, company personnel at management as well as shop floor level, language and technical trainers, funding and project coordinators. I felt this was a strong feature of the project and it proved to be the case. It resulted in a significant degree of hands on involvement by all partners, in particular supervisory staff who also participated in some of the language support delivery but most importantly gave solid support on the shop floor. This gave trainees confidence and broke down some of the traditional reticence they felt towards supervisors / leading hands. Reciprocally there was a high degree of awareness by supervisors of what we were doing and an active interest in driving the program. Trainees also had the advantage of a wider range of input and support over and above that of trainers. Trainers on the other hand were able to draw on extra assistance and support from the other project partners.

We structured the program using a fairly traditional formula of a 2 hour formal training session for the technical content followed the next day by a language support session. One of the concessions made to

production demands was cutting the language support session down to only 1 hour (from 2 hours). In retrospect this was a significant loss as both trainees and myself felt the pinch and pressure of attending to content clarification as well as relevant language skills within a short span of 60 minutes. To compensate for this short fall I found myself spending more and more time working individually with each trainee at their work station.

I spent on average 2 to 3 hours a week on this, consulting one to one with trainees on their course assignments and helping them with sorting out correct descriptions of their job tasks and writing these up into task breakdowns, flow charts, and the various documents required by the course. This was invaluable support for trainees in their process of transferring knowledge and skills from training room to shop floor and integrating language development with workplace competencies. I am of the opinion that this one to one contact on the shop floor is a very valuable form of support for this type of training, not only for NESB workers but for anyone undertaking workplace trainer training. As such I think it should be a legitimate component in its own right, not a substitute for formal language support sessions nor a compensation for reduction in formal session time. However it is dependant on the on site availability of a trainer or skilled support person. In this case it was only possible because I was in the position of enterprise based language trainer at Sheridan and so had the necessary disposable time and ready access to the shop floor.

The language support methodologies we used in this program were as always determined by the project framework within which we were operating. As mentioned above the participation of some of the project partners in our formal training sessions enriched both the amount and quality of support trainees received. It also enabled project partners to keep abreast of the course content and see at first hand the skill development of the trainees.

Basically we spent each support session clarifying concepts and content of the previous course session. This was necessary for trainees with more basic levels of English and a useful revision for the others. I rewrote plain English versions of essential parts of the course book and used these to clarify and promote discussions. I also provided key word lists for vocabulary extension as well as specific language exercises as appropriate. For example we did a writing exercise on abbreviating sentences into notes in tandem with the group's work on writing task breakdown sheets and training plans. We also worked on verbal language concentrating on accent and correct pronunciation in preparation for the participants' delivery of shopfloor training. The development of support material and a plain English version of some of the Cat 1 training materials is a valuable product of this project and something worth developing in full.

Perhaps the most interesting aspect of this project is the provision for ongoing support and documentation as these graduate trainees apply their workplace trainer skills. This means that the project does not stop at the end of the training program but follows through to track and support the application of training outcomes in the workplace. Being an enterprise based language trainer has again been an advantage as I am able to participate in the planning process for the utilisation of the skills of these NESB women employees, so ensuring that their expertise and newly acquired confidence is reinforced and maintained and the company does not lose the gains made. At the time of writing this paper we are about to enter the post training phase and I look forward to participating and observing the results.

Recommendations

1. One of the important aspects of this project was the integration of language support with technical training seen as a prerequisite for successful outcomes. However it was the range and type of support which ensured as much as anything the success of the project.

   It is recommended that the integration of language support in this type of training be structured to include adequate time for language support in formal training sessions and provision for on the job support on an individual needs basis.

   And individual on the job support be available if possible through a specialist trainer based on site.

2. The selection procedure used a number of criteria other than English language levels to select participants. We found this was a useful approach in assembling an appropriate group of trainees who had high success potential.

   It is recommended that selection criteria for such training include: a minimal level of English language and literacy proficiency which realistically reflects the training and work competencies required so as not to exclude potentially successful participants; a high standard of work skills; an indication of potential for developing the target competencies of the training.

3. The close working relationship between the project partners particularly in the delivery of training and the utilisation of trainee skills has been a very strong feature of this project and a major reason for its success. It has meant maximum support for the trainees and maximum opportunity for the recognition and utilisation of their skills.

   It is recommended that training programs which target the development and recognition of work skills of NESB women assemble a full component of project partners representing all aspects and levels of the program and make full use of the resources available in such a project team.

4. Trainees found the plain English versions of some of the course text a useful tool in grasping the basic concepts and their applications.

   It is recommended that key training programs for NESB women be supported by the development of plain English course materials.

5. One of the most interesting aspects of this project is the provision of ongoing support and documentation as graduate trainees apply their workplace trainer skills so that their expertise and newly acquired confidence is reinforced and maintained and the company does not lose the gains made.

   It is recommended that tailored programs of training for NESB women, such as Workplace Trainer, include the necessary follow up support in the application of acquired skills so reinforcing and capturing the gains made.

Conclusion

We feel the aims of the original brief have been achieved. The methodologies used in the project structuring, the selection procedure, the training delivery and the post training follow up are an indication of ways of overcoming barriers to the utilisation of NESB women's workplace skills and expertise.

The successful attainment of portable, nationally recognised qualifications have given this small group of trainees a vehicle for recognition and advancement in their current or other jobs. What is necessary now is the implementation of this type of experiment in other workplaces so the opportunities can open up for greater numbers of NESB women workers and they can have a significant representation in vocational training at a national level.

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Literacy and numeracy online

Douglas Purcell and Don Strempel

Background

In 1996 TAFE SA funded several projects to develop online course materials as part of its strategy to move a substantial portion of course delivery into the online environment. The major vocational program areas were targeted for funding as well as those programs that delivered to designated target groups such as women, NESB, ATSI and those needing to improve their L&N skills.

The Vocational Preparation Department at the Adelaide Institute of TAFE secured some of this funding to develop online learning materials for use in ALBE programs. Part of this funding was also used for staff development and training in the use of online technologies.

Currently, over twenty modules from three certificate courses covering ALBE and Women's Education are available online. Additional modules are under development including ESL materials, while existing modules are being reviewed and updated.

Information about theses online course materials can be found at
http://www.tafe.sa.edu.au/top/prep (and top/women)

Development Issues

There were a number of issues which had to be considered before the online project got underway. These included:

- Target group
- Staff development and training
- Instructional design
- Student access
- Redefining lecturing roles

(1) There was much discussion prior to the start of the project concerning the suitability of the online learning environment for ALBE students. Some practitioners were opposed to the idea:

How will they cope reading from a computer screen?

They won't have access to the Internet.

Staff don't have the skills.

While it was necessary to have a debate about the merits of the project most of the discussion was much more positive and encouraging than the above. Moreover, it was always our intention that the online materials would not be available for beginning readers and writers but rather learners at NRS levels 2-3 and beyond. We were also interested in expanding our delivery options and reaching a wider audience - especially for remote and isolated students.

(2) At the start of the project there was a definite lack of online skills and knowledge among staff in ALBE programs. This was addressed in two ways. The project team formed an action learning set with an online IT focus. This group received training in using online technologies - email, Internet, WWW, HTML techniques, FTP and delivery platforms. Much of this training was ongoing throughout the life of the project.

The other strategy was to focus on the needs of practitioners. This was achieved through a series of workshops which covered the basics of using online technologies with students. A staff member was also appointed as online education adviser to the statewide Vocational Preparation Program.

(3) To help overcome fears about students not coping with reading from the computer screen or getting lost in the navigation all of the materials have been developed to a simple template. The pages are short in length and plain in design. There is no distracting animation or unnecessary clutter of information. Onscreen interaction allows students to input text, check answers to self-tests and print pages if needed.

The online modules are housed on a delivery platform (WebCT) which provides access to email, bulletin board and chat facilities. We believe strongly that our staff and students benefit greatly from the opportunity to develop their online communication skills in a world which is asking them to use this technology more and more. Besides, they enjoy using it!

(4) While the online materials were primarily designed for Internet access, to date most of the access has been on campus via intranet. Lecturers have found the materials a useful addition to their delivery options, especially where students enjoy computer based learning. There is also the added benefit of the teacher being present to assist students face to face. For our Internet students this is of course not the case. Although we encourage them to make on campus visits if they are able to most communication is via email or telephone. The use of email and sending attachments has had a positive effect on writing skills development.

(5) Who should develop the online materials? Should teachers get involved? One early response was:

It's not the role of teachers to be doing such technical (HTML) development.

We believed that the best project team would contain content specialists (teachers), Web experts and instructional designers. By working together the participants shared skills and learnt from each other. They were able to develop a product that used the technology to promote a model for student centered learning. Moreover, we now have teaching staff with the skills to be able to write learning materials straight into online format. These staff are also key online resource people at their workplaces and provide a valuable mentoring role for their colleagues.

The Future

We have learnt a great deal about the online environment over the last two years. Apart from the obvious technical and instructional design skills we have also learnt from the experiences of staff and students teaching and learning online. This will impact on how we proceed with developing new materials and the revision of existing ones. Although online learning materials have a limited shelf life they don't have the additional cost of expensive re-prints.

Another feature of online materials is the flexibility they bring to delivery. They can be customised for different client groups such as the workplace and be a component of training packages. They can also be used as a stand-alone computer based resource without the need for Internet connection (as long as browser software is preloaded). The files can be sent to students via a floppy disk and staff can modify them at their own workplace or adapt them for print-based use.

The roles of teacher and student are being reshaped by these new technologies and it will certainly benefit our students and colleagues if we get involved and help shape this learning environment.

Douglas Purcell and Don Strempel

ALBE teachers on the front line of pedagogical 'good practice'

Jill Sanguinetti

The Context

Ever since the Australian Language and Literacy Policy (ALLP) and the National Training Reform Agenda (NTRA) were put in place in the early 90s, the culture, institutional conditions and 'life worlds' of ALBE teaching have changed dramatically.

The changes ushered in by the Federal Labor government entailed new sets of restraints and accountabilities: curriculum was planned, accredited, organised and assessed according to competency-based frameworks. The CES had a powerful role in funding programs and deciding on the nature of courses and on how clients were to be referred. There was pressure to show positive student outcomes in terms of employment placement or mainstream training. At the same time, there was more funding than ever before for adult literacy, and new and innovative programs and methods were developed. Many new sessional and contract jobs were created for teachers. However, the culture of 'the field', the kinds of commitments people brought to ALBE teaching, and notions of what constituted good teaching were profoundly challenged - with complex and contradictory effects. This paper is a work in progress exploring these issues.

The Research

For my PhD research, I studied the impact of these changes and how practitioners of adult literacy and ESL were responding 'in discourse'. I was interested in applying Foucault's notions of power and discourse (Foucault 1972; Foucault 1981; Weedon 1987) to the issues faced by practitioners: that is, how power operates through language and meaning and how we are constituted and subjectified by fields of discourse which reflect political contestation in society more broadly. I was particularly interested in exploring how the 'politics of discourse' (Yeatman 1990) were unfolding in the context of ALBE. The research was carried out during the period of 1994, 95 and 96, which was the heyday of the NTRA period. I worked with ALBE and ESL teachers in Melbourne on two different action research projects. One was an action research evaluation of the impact on teaching practice of the CGEA (Sanguinetti 1995). The other was a process of discussion and feedback with a group of teachers at a Melbourne TAFE College. Those meetings continued intermittently over a period of three years. I taped and transcribed or took notes of the meetings, and fed back my interpretations at subsequent sessions. The teachers spoke in depth about the new institutional and funding environment and how it was affecting their practice. With both projects, the picture which emerged was very complex. It was impossible to say whether the teachers were either resisting or complying with the new arrangements and the new demands on their teaching. Most of the teachers seemed to be doing both at the same time.

But I am leaping ahead of myself. My aim in this paper is to indicate briefly how I went about analysing the texts produced in both projects, and what I learned from that analysis about the changing discourses of practice and the complex dynamics of resistance and compliance.

Discourse 'mapping'

I devised a kind of discourse analysis (which I call discourse 'mapping') in order to study how teachers were discursively constructing 'good practice' in the context of change and new and stressful demands. It is not my intention here to go into great depth about my method of mapping discourses within the texts - that is the topic of another paper. By building on the notion of discourse offered by Foucault (and subsequently developed by for example, Kress (1985), Gee (1990), Fairclough (1992), Lemke (1995), I delineated several discourses that appeared to be 'present' in teachers' discussions of the

impact on them of new policy. I grouped the discourses into three main discursive configurations (or clusters) which were at times in conflict with each other and at times seemed to be blending and hybridising into new discursive formations.

The three main clusters were, *progressivist, professional teacher*, and *performative* discourse.

Progressivist discourse

The role of progressivist discourse in ALBE has been analysed and discussed in research carried out by Alison Lee and Rosie Wickert (Lee and Wickert 1994; Lee and Wickert 1995). Progressivist discourse reflects various aspects of the historical development of ALBE on the margins of mainstream educational institutions. Adult education in its historical origins was seen as a tool for self-improvement and self-fulfilment as well as a means for improving society. The progressivist vision was both philanthropic (imbued with notions of welfare, and a charitable concern for the more disadvantaged members of society) and politically idealistic. For example, Dewey (1916), a classical liberal progressivist, saw education in terms of fostering individual development and experiential learning as preparation for participation in democratic society. In the early part of this century, the Workers' Education Societies formed uneasy alliances between trade unions and university extension departments, and were committed to the education of workers as part of the struggle for improved conditions and rights (McKinlay 1979: 562). Progressivist theorists such as Rogers (1969) regard teaching as being about 'real' interpersonal relationships and providing conditions which would facilitate holistic, experiential learning by the whole individual. Education should aim to produce the 'fully functioning person' who would know both freedom and commitment.

Lee and Wickert (1994, 1995) have described progressivist discourse as a foundational discourse of ALBE pedagogy. They pointed out that it constructs the principle of adult learning as a right, the idea of the centrality of the individual, and beliefs about adult learning as a natural process of growth to be supported and nurtured. In their research, they found that adult literacy texts, such as those produced by ACAL, constructed adult literacy in progressivist terms and they found very little evidence of a discourse of critical literacy. The texts I studied likewise showed few traces of critical literacy or critical pedagogy discourse. 'Critical' understandings seemed to be expressed in terms of the 'moral responsibility' of teachers to introduce and facilitate democratic discussion of social and political issues, rather than in terms of developing explicitly critical dialogue in the classroom or teaching the skills of analysis and deconstruction of powerful texts. In that sense, it appeared that 'critical literacy' discourse was subsumed into progressivist discourse.

Professional teacher discourse

The second main discourse I delineated was what I have called 'professional teacher' discourse. This is the set of understandings, values and practices which have evolved with respect to mainstream institutional settings. Trained school teachers who became involved in adult literacy teaching during the 80s brought with them an explicit awareness of issues of curriculum, assessment, methods and an awareness of teaching as a developing craft (Connell 1985: 77-79) which involved the making of complex situational judgments (Preston 1996: 1). Trained teachers brought with them a sense of their own industrial rights and conditions and a sense of the teaching 'profession'. The professional teacher discourse constructs the teacher as one who is reflexive about her own practice and maintains a certain professional 'distance' while developing her classroom teaching as a multi-layered 'craft'.

Performative discourse

Thirdly, I grouped together the new discourses associated with NTRA policy, and named these under the heading of 'performative' discourse. Jean-François Lyotard described performativity as:

> *"the best possible input/output equation. The State or company must abandon the idealist and humanist narratives of legitimation in order to justify the new goal ... Scientists, technicians and instruments are purchased not to find truth, but to augment power"* (Lyotard 1984: 46).

Yeatman (1994) has taken up the notion of the performative State, which she says "subsumes democratising claims within a managerialist-functionalist rhetoric" to meet the needs of the global capitalist economy. Colin Lankshear in a recent paper, wrote that performativity in education is about creating the sorts of skills among learners that are indispensable to maximum efficiency of the social system which is now conceived as a player in the market place of global capitalism (Lankshear 1998: 11).

I grouped under the heading of 'performativity' aspects of the new policy discourse which tended to commodify or instrumentalise ALBE to economic ends and to make it more 'efficient' and institutionally accountable.

Performative discourse was apparent in the text in different ways. Many teachers spoke or wrote about the new policies and requirements in ways which implied an underlying 'enemy discourse' which the teachers either gently criticised or bitterly railed against. They were opposed to many of the policies introduced into ALBE by the NTRA: the privileging of vocational outcomes, the introduction of performance-based criteria through competency-based assessment, the introduction of marketisation and deregulation, and the undermining of teachers' professionalism through 'content-free' managerialism. Other teachers were more accepting and more willing to adapt to the new requirements.

Discourse dynamics

In many cases, teachers seemed to be positioning themselves within progressivist and professional teacher discourses as a discourse of resistance to performative discourse. In fact, progressivist/professional teacher discourse seemed in some ways to becoming strengthened in opposition to performative discourse.

However, whilst explicitly critiquing aspects and requirements of performativity, it was apparent that teachers were also absorbing it into their language and hence into their implicit pedagogical practices. In other words, the discourse, the culture, of performativity may be colonising the thinking and work of teachers despite their overt opposition to it.

The interesting thing about this, in many cases, was that the importation of new ways of seeing and doing, was not necessarily negative. Those teachers who engaged with performativity most intensely, and struggled both to resist and to comply (according to their own commitments to 'good practice' and their perceptions of what they could or could not get away with) seemed to be producing new, hybrid discourses of pedagogical good practice. In other words, elements of performativity, taken into the teachers' understandings and repertoires, fed into the evolution of more complex and sophisticated notions of pedagogical 'good practice'.

By contrast, some of those who denounced the demands of performativity most vehemently, positioning themselves strongly in progressivist /professional teacher discourse, seemed in some ways to be holding on to the 'tried and true', rather than taking on board new ideas and developing their craft in that context.

These contradictory processes were apparent in the texts in complex, diffuse ways. Obviously, the process of identifying discursive traces within text is fairly slippery, and the boundaries of the 'discourses' which I delineated are necessarily fuzzy. My interpretation, is of course influenced by my own experiences, positioning and my political project in undertaking the research.

Anita's story

By way of illustration, I want to present one small excerpt, which shows how complex the picture is, and how understandings of 'good practice' may be evolving (or not) in the current conditions. This excerpt is from a text of teachers in the second action research project. I had asked them to share 'critical incidents' in the classroom - times when they felt extremely challenged as a teacher and were not sure how to act.

This was Anita's story:

> *... I had this split second feeling of wanting to back away from what I had done, but I decided not to.*
> *I was doing my 'rallying speech' to the [...] class to encourage them to see themselves as being beyond the need for ESL, and I was going on about how they need to enlist the past and their past experience and use that to look to the future in terms of goal setting and positive self-image. It was real bleeding hearts sort of stuff but it was sort of that moment in the group when you are saying, "now, stop seeing yourself as NESB. Put it behind you." I think that the response that I got... my fear is that when you are doing that, you can have the effect of building up too high expectations. So, as I was giving this sort of speech, I looked around and one student was sort of in tears, positive tears, she was moved with what I was saying. But I had a split second feeling of "stop now". I just thought that what I was saying was too enormous, I was putting much too much onto an expectation of what might come for them. I had a quick flash that I should stop immediately because the absorbed attention that I had; I suppose it was a bit frightening, the whole class sort of hanging there and I had started ... I went on, I thought no, they need to hear it, but my fear was that I had sort of raised the expectations and that the outside world doesn't view them as 'non-language needs' people. And so it's easy for me to do that sort of preaching in the classroom and to give then all that positive ... but then they go out into their work experience and you get the supervisor saying "can't understand them .." So it was that terrible dilemma of feeling that you really believe in them, and getting them to really believe in themselves and then knowing what they might come up against the very next day ...*
>
> *It was resolved in terms of feeling, no, I'll go ahead with it and it just makes me feel that I've got to really work at equipping them with I suppose strategies.*
>
> *... But you feel so enormously humble and so responsible at that moment because the feeling in the room was just palpable, there was just silence, and I thought, "God, what have I done?"*
>
> *... They'll be embarking on work experience in a few weeks time and now is the really intensive time to prepare them for that and to point out the reality of it and what they are likely to expect in it, but at the same time to do lots and lots and lots of language work in terms of, for example, how to clarify messages, all those things that the outside immediately shun them if they don't understand ...*
>
> *The course is seen as an exciting course. They are at the end of the road here, and yes they are, they are very, very well equipped to be out there. Given better economic times, I'm sure they would 100% be in employment.*

Interpretation

Progressivist, professional teacher and performative discourses are blending and contending in complex ways within Anita's personal/professional subjectivity, her teaching 'habitus' (Bourdieu 1992: 97).

In this excerpt, she shows how she is involved in a very 'real' and emotional relationship with her students, as well as in the mechanics of skills development. Her 'rallying speech' at the end of the course was about her role in mediating a crucial period of transition in the identities of her students: that is, their transition from identifying as migrants and students (ie, as 'novices', situated on the outside of the mainstream) to identifying as Australian citizens, as full members of the community and as competent members of the work force. Her overt task was to prepare students for work by teaching language, literacy and vocational skills. However, in order to assist them to move out of the learned dependency of the classroom and orient them to face the challenges of job-hunting and employment, she had to work with them on an affective level, as people whose lives beyond the classroom are part of the learning process.

The students' 'graduation' to their first week of work experience was like a rite of passage symbolising that transition. That the students were moved emotionally by her words of encouragement and exhortation suggests she had touched on contradictory feelings they had around leaving the supportive environment of the classroom and facing the uncertainties and hazards of the labour market. She had reflected back to the students an image of themselves which had somehow opened up amongst them a pool of emotions: nostalgia for certainties of the past, disappointments, hopes, fears, imagined and yearned-for futures.

However, Anita knew about the harsh realities awaiting the students; the high rate of migrant unemployment and the disadvantage of having less than perfect English. There was a contradiction between her raising their expectations, and the reality of scarce jobs, racism and intolerance in the wider community.

At the same time, she had a flash of awareness about her own personal and rhetorical power; one student had been moved to tears and the others were hanging on her words. She did not feel altogether comfortable with the students' emotional responses to her "rallying speech" and with her sudden perception of herself in an 'inspirational' role.

Anita was experiencing two different kinds of pedagogical dilemma at the same time. First, there was an ethical dilemma, one which is common amongst adult educators in time of high unemployment. On the one hand there was the need to motivate, encourage and inspire the students to strive to succeed, to be ready to compete confidently in the job market; on the other hand there was a responsibility not give them false hopes and to prepare them to face the strong possibility of disappointment and/or discrimination.

Second, she had faced a dilemma about how best to respond, how best to teach at that moment. This was also a crisis in her own subjectivity as a teacher. On the one hand, there was the need to engage with the feelings of the students about the challenges before them. At the same time there was a responsibility not to 'over-do' it: *not* to encourage the emotional flood gates to open too far, and not to use the feeling of that moment in a way which would make her the focus of their attention.

This moment of crisis was resolved by her deciding that she would go on with what she was saying but that she would re-commit herself to helping them "with the confidence to deal with that and to push on through it which is vital to sort of getting out of labelling themselves ...". She would "really work at equipping them with I suppose strategies ... to do lots and lots and lots of language work in terms of ... how to clarify messages and all those things that the outside immediately shun them [for] if they don't understand." Her decision to focus her efforts on developing the students' work skills also resolved the small crisis in her own subjectivity. She implicitly moved away from the emotions surrounding the migrant experience, to a 'commonsense' approach of supporting them as best she could as a teacher; realising that her most important contribution to their lives was simply to teach them what they needed to know in order to have the best chance of surviving. Rather than further stimulating or involving herself in the emotions of that moment (the shared experiences of sacrifices made in order to immigrate, hopes and fears for the future) she thought very practically about the additional skills she needed to teach them.

This bit of the text reflects Anita's positioning within a hybridising progressivist/professional teacher discourse. She sees her responsibility, in one way, as nurturing the processes of development of the identities of the people in her group towards being confident workers and citizens. However, her relationship with the students does not seem to be patronising or cloying. In persuading, cajoling and encouraging the students to look to the future, she is both nurturing and instructing, and doing so in a way which is highly professional as well as personal. The professionalism is evident in the sensitivity with which she reflects on her role, and her instinct to maintain a degree of distance, not to allow the collective emotions to be focused on her. In her own mind, she saw her role, finally, as the one who could provide them with the skills, rather than the emotional supports they needed.

An alternative reading of this incident is that it was a moment of re-inscription of performative discourse in her subjectivity. At other times, Anita was an outspoken critic of competency-based assessment and the focus on vocational outcomes. In this moment of crisis, she automatically thought in terms of language work and required skills. It may have been open to her at this point to develop some critical discussion around the difficulties of finding employment, the current economic situation

and so forth. Instead, she focused on how she must teach the actual skills which may somehow mean the difference between employment and unemployment, their acceptance or their rejection in the mainstream. However, a judgement about whether or not that would have been possible, or appropriate at that time, and with that group, could only be made by Anita herself.

Anita's story gives a tiny glimpse of pedagogical practice in complex and difficult times. Her self-reflections reveal an ethical commitment to working with and supporting the unemployed migrant workers who are her students, on a number of levels. It also reveals a process of her own ethical and professional self-shaping, in a way that Jennifer Gore (1993: 127) writes about, building on Foucault's analysis of 'technologies of the self' (1985: 29).

Conclusion: evolving notions of 'good practice'

I have not had time, in this brief presentation, to go into issues of resistance and compliance in any depth. Without a permanent base, there are few spaces for ALBE teachers to resist overtly innovations which appear to undermine or erode their work.

However, like many other teachers in this study, Anita has learned to adapt and to subvert the requirements of performativity to suit her own pedagogical notions and her own commitments to 'good practice'. In some ways she is becoming more 'professional' by integrating into her repertoire and thinking, some elements associated with performativity. These include an orientation to systematic skills development and vocational outcomes, and the use of more structured, genre-based curriculum frameworks.

Discourses of practice are constantly developing at the interface of classroom practice and political and social context, and teachers are powerful players in this process. Many of the teachers in this study appear to be colonising performative discourse, and turning it to their own pedagogical and professional ends, rather than the other way around. What forms, then, will 'good practice' take in the future? Will progressivist /professional teacher practices, values and ethical standpoints continue to evolve? Will we allow ALBE teaching to become increasingly instrumentalised to the norms and requirements of performativity? Or will we 'take over' performativity and naturalise it within our own discourses of 'good practice'?

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Jill Sanguinetti

Presentation of a model for on-line assessment and moderation using the Certificates In General Education for Adults and incorporating the National Reporting System.

Debbie Soccio

The On-line Assessment and Moderation Homepage Project was an Australian National Training Authority (ANTA) Adult Literacy National Project administered by the Department of Employment, Education, Training and Youth Affairs (DEETYA).

The Department of Adult Basic Education, Victoria University (incorporating Western Melbourne Institute of TAFE) managed the Project. We began the Project on 1 July 1997 and launched the Homepage at the end of June, 1998. The Project was managed by Daryl Evans, the Project Coordinator was Debbie Soccio and the Technical Officer was Patricia Bodsworth.

Below are some excerpts from the final report presented to ANTA on completion of the on-line assessment and moderation Homepage Project. These excerpts attempt to provide a general overview to the rationale, methodology, activities and issues which were undertaken within the Project.

At the time of writing this paper, (July, 1998) the second ANTA funded project was in its initial stages, and we were not able to make any detailed assumptions regarding its progress.

Rationale

The development of competency based curriculum in language and literacy such as the CGEA and more recently the development of the National Reporting System has highlighted the need for teacher moderation to ensure that interpretations of competency standards are consistent across providers and over time.

The development of an on-line language and literacy moderation Homepage provides opportunities for debate and discussion regarding the interpretation of the competency standards and assessment criteria of a range of accredited literacy frameworks, using a model that would be widely applicable to other language and literacy assessment and reporting tools.

The Homepage was established to complement real time moderation rather than replace it, but has the potential to become part of a national system to maintain the reliability and validity of language and literacy assessment.

Moderation has been a part of the CGEA since 1993. When the system of moderation was introduced most teachers in the field were unfamiliar with the notion or actual experience of participating in such processes. Now, six years later, many teachers are again familiarising themselves with the changing context of moderation. As funding for face-to-face moderation decreases and as employment practice becomes more casualised, practitioners find it more difficult to attend sessions which had been financially supported since the inception of the accredited document.

Practitioners within city locations are still more likely to attend moderation at regional and cross regional levels because the cost of travel and time involved is significantly less and short-term replacement arrangements are more feasible. Some regions within Victoria have not provided any funding for moderation in this current financial year. Some have provided a minimum of funding. Other regions, including interstate providers, have maintained funded moderation sessions but less frequently.

Organisations often send one person to moderation to represent a community centre, private provider or larger TAFE institution. With limited time, financial support and simply the lack of opportunity to

travel to a central point to share in a moderation session, many other teachers using the CGEA as the basis of their teaching framework may not have the opportunity to attend moderation sessions at all.

What is moderation?

Moderation is the process whereby teachers/assessors discuss and reach agreement about assessments in a particular assessment system. In so doing, a shared understanding develops between teachers/assessors about what is being assessed and why, and how different assessment performances should be identified and described.

This process of shared understanding facilitates more effective teaching and learning as assessment practice is regularly reviewed in relation to curriculum objectives. Staff professionalism is enhanced when teachers/assessors become more familiar with assessment theory and practice and are able to make more consistent assessment judgments.

Historically, there were two types of moderation meetings which practitioners teaching in CGEA programs were required to attend. All teachers were expected to moderate at least twice a year with other teachers teaching the same stream. These two types were:

1. **Moderation Processes and Procedures**: a discussion of practices necessary to develop consistency in benchmarking, sampling and recording in interpreting standards and designing assessments across all streams in the certificates.

2. **Moderation for Verification**: a process which ratifies assessments carried out for certification purposes for each stream across all levels.

In recent years, when attending the moderation session itself, many practitioners have commented on the changed focus of Moderation for Verification to a *quality assurance procedure* which provides opportunity to *participate in professional development sessions* with other teachers.

The on-line moderation process is concerned with quality management of the CGEA. It aims to supplement existing face-to-face moderation currently operating within and across providers of the Certificate. Furthermore, it provides additional professional development for new and experienced practitioners in the CGEA and is so doing aims to facilitate inter and intra rater reliability.

Objectives

The Objectives of the Project were to:

- Develop an interactive Homepage for language and literacy moderation
- Develop a model for on-line moderation which is applicable for a range of credentials
- Develop assessment and moderation Discussion Groups where issues regarding assessment can be discussed by teachers and academics
- Provide a moderation option which can be accessed by isolated staff in remote locations (assuming that appropriate hardware and software are available)
- Provide information appropriate for teachers who are new to a credential or moderation process

Methodology

The project aimed to establish a bank of assessment tasks and responses developed through wide consultation with literacy professionals currently involved in the delivery of the Certificates in General Education for Adults, and to make this bank of materials widely available through the use of new technology.

The implementation stage built on existing best practice in moderation which relies on consensus amongst literacy professionals to maintain consistency in the interpretation of competency statements and assessment criteria for awarding the credential. The high value of consultation amongst experience literacy professionals was also reflected in the establishment of a steering committee for the project.

Once the collection of teacher tasks and accompanying student performances was complete the Project Team had the job of sorting through over 800 tasks to determine which samples were presented in a manner that contained enough information in their original format to be adaptable to this new model of moderation. The criteria for choice for each sample included some or all of the following:

- the sample task and student performance had to be accompanied by a reasonably clear moderation cover sheet
- for tasks and performances which had been mapped to the old certificate (applicable until the beginning of 1997), the sample needed to be typical of one which could then be presented within the framework of the new certificate
- examples of the types of tasks typically presented at moderation sessions were chosen
- the student work needed to be clear enough to read and retype without too much strain on the typist's eyes
- samples which were lengthy were not chosen as these would only slow down the user's time moving between links
- samples which contained graphics were chosen only when the Project Team thought the graphic was clear enough to scan
- the task and/or student performance were not easily traced back to the original owner or provider.

For each of the learner responses, the Panel was asked to provide explanations of how the learner met the learning outcome according to the relevant assessment criteria, conditions of assessment, underpinning knowledge and NRS language features and performance strategies. To do this, they:

- made annotations next to the learner response
- wrote explanations next to each assessment criterion
- discussed and then wrote general comments on whether the learner performance did in fact demonstrate minimum competence. The comments made were based on the information contained in the original documents (including any details on curriculum context, range and conditions of assessment and any other teacher comments) as well as discussion about the appropriateness and suitability of the task in allowing the student to actually demonstrate competence.

In competency-based assessment such as in the CGEA, there are two processes of moderation: *task moderation* and *learner performance moderation*. This project has confined itself to the moderation of learner performances. Samples of learner performances are discussed in relation to the learning outcomes and performance criteria specified by the task. These samples are evaluated in terms of whether or not they reach the benchmark or minimum level of performance required.

Task moderation, on the other hand deals with the content of the instructions to learners which is evaluated in terms of whether or not the learning outcome/s can be assessed and the performance criteria can be demonstrated according to the specified range statements.

In some instances, the Panel comments relate to the validity of the task, or the inappropriateness of a task but these comments are made to highlight the fact the learner performance was deemed not to have met the nominated assessment criteria, or not assessable because of the task.

Where did the samples come from?

The range of assessment tasks which has been complied were collected from past moderation sessions around the country.

Some samples have been moderated using the old CGEA document (particularly in the Reading and Writing Stream and the General Curriculum Options Stream) However, all samples used were evaluated on the merit of whether the task was representative of the *types* of tasks that are generally presented at moderation (either in past or present moderation sessions)

The tasks which were originally mapped to the old CGEA certificate were analysed by the panel members and the assessment criteria were re-addressed based on the set task, the representative learner performance and other additional evidence noted on the original cover sheets.

The Project Team worked to ensure that the range of sample tasks and styles of training methodologies, content topics and a variety of learner responses for each stream were indeed, representative of the types of tasks that are generally presented at moderation (either past or present moderation sessions).

Hence, the final samples chosen do not represent the "best" in the field, nor should they. The Project Team has not set out to develop a set of benchmarked materials but has tried to analyse learner performances which respond appropriately to the specific assessment criteria.

Links to the National Reporting System

In consultation with literacy professionals it was suggested that any benchmarking be linked to the NRS which is the moderating standard for the CGEA, the reporting standard for Literacy and Numeracy Training for 18-24 year old (DEETYA 1998), and Workplace English Language & Literacy Programs (WELL). The NRS also have translation statements with other major national language and literacy and numeracy related curricula being used across Australia. The relationship with the NRS is even more crucial given that the NRS resources are also being adopted to make explicit language, literacy and numeracy in industry standards and subsequently in the non endorsed components of the National Training Packages currently being developed through ANTA with National Industry Training Advisory Boards.

The on-line assessment and moderation systems model provides an opportunity for practitioners who deliver Literacy and Numeracy Training to Jobseekers (18-24 years old) and report back to DEETYA using the National Reporting System subsequent to moderation beyond the Provider.

The model has incorporated the Indicators of Competence within the National Reporting System and has been referred to within the annotated criteria.

Why create an on-line assessment and moderation Homepage?

The Homepage seeks to create discussion about the issues that arise from the CGEA; the understanding of the requirements made of students in demonstrating assessment criteria; the difficulties in interpreting what the assessment criteria actually mean; effective interpretation by the teacher and effective demonstration by the learner of the assessment criteria.

The Project Team acknowledged the needs to ensure the development of a useful moderation system that can be maintained as part of the ongoing maintenance of standards which the New Training Framework will require.

The model has the ability to maintain and increase the quality of delivery of the CGEA and other accredited curricula by being able to incorporate a flexible mode of delivery, with a capacity to integrate teachers, academics and students. It allows them access to a wide range of assessment materials that ensure competency standards and assessment criteria can be met nation wide.

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Benefits of an on-line system of moderation

The Homepage has sought to create discussion about assessment and moderation issues that arise in general forums, amongst users of the CGEA; the understanding of the requirements made of students in demonstrating assessment criteria; the difficulties in interpreting what the assessment criteria actually mean; effective interpretation by the teacher and effective demonstration by the learner of the assessment criteria. Some of the potential benefits to developing and maintaining an on-line assessment and moderation Homepage and which require further evaluation, include:

- Improvements in accessibility, time and cost: draws in all assessors using the system including remote assessors across the state or country and those who are unable to be released from work to attend face-to-face meetings;
- Moderation can occur at any time convenient to assessors
- It is cost effective in terms of staff release and travel times
- A different process (because it is currently available): guidelines and on-going discussion on assessment practice and theory are accessible during the moderation process. This should enable assessors to make more considered judgments.
- The assessor has control over the assessment process in terms of the time s/he chooses to take to assess and the choice of stages in the assessment process.
- Anonymity of assessment practice encourages new assessors to participate more comfortably.
- Reliability of assessment: all assessors in the country are taking part in the same moderation session, thereby reducing the possibility of local or regional variation.
- Encouragement of interstate moderation for a commonly delivered national reporting system
- Opportunities for practitioners to observe and discuss differences in interpretations of levels and assessment criteria and to share successful ways of moderating in other areas.

Disadvantages of an on-line moderation system

Accompanying the advantages are also some disadvantages:

- Update and maintenance of the Homepage beyond the life of the project on going costs (to government, to providers and/or to others)
- Technical or financial impediments to the ability of practitioners to up-load and down-load samples regularly
- Degree of work involved and information required to present one sample in an appropriate style on-line
- Unknown effect of the on-line assessment and moderation Homepage's application to alternative forms of moderation using on-line technology.

Feedback and evaluation of a model for on-line assessment and moderation in adult literacy

The Project Team, within Adult Basic Education, Victoria University, has been successful in tendering for a further project under the Australian Language and Literacy Policy ANTA Adult Literacy National Projects 1998.

The project brief is to further develop, through the collection of feedback and evaluation from practitioners, the current project which established a model for on-line assessment and moderation. This project will explore in detail and evaluate the effectiveness, efficiency and impact on teacher's practice of professional development in assessment and moderation using on-line technology.

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Students as partners in developing on-line teaching

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Introduction

The following courseware was developed not just by computer experts, not by over-enthusiastic teachers, but by a team which included what we could refer to as 'a small community of learners'. Students are team advisors who participated from the initial phase of courseware development to the final implementation of the courseware. Most of them were undergraduate students in the Faculty of Education. Their contribution was made in regards to the conceptualization of principles governing web-based courseware, learning and teaching, and human interface design. This paper discusses those aspects and the final product: the courseware.

Principles Governing Courseware Design

Two key principles governing interface design are considered in constructing this WEB-based courseware. We refer the first principle as 'the friendliness principle and the second as the motivation principle. Both of these principles are inherent in various CAL packages. In the literature, certain features such as user-friendly, interactive, purposeful etc. are discussed and employed in CALL software construction and evaluation. However, they are loosely inter-connected rather than well-incorporated into principles.

1. The Friendliness Principle

The term 'user-friendly' has been widely used in the construction and evaluation of CAL software, with a particular reference to interface design. Like many other terms introduced in the literature, 'user-friendly' means different things to different software designers and their clients. Basically, the use of this term aims at shifting the focus of attention from the software to its users. Software users are not seen as passive receivers at the end of the construction line but they are the primary source of inspiration guiding the construction process. Metaphorically, the user is the boss and the software designer is the servant. This is a basis on which courseware should be based. However, there are interesting problems in applying the concept 'user-friendly' in education. Educators are becoming serious in selecting software for teaching and learning. A software package with its complicated design technique aiming at 'making the user happy and friendly' may not be a good candidate for classroom learning. This is particularly true with many computer games, which may be very 'user-friendly' but educationally 'un-friendly'. Due to this difficulty with the use of the term 'user-friendly' in education, we introduce its counterpart 'learner-friendly' which should not be seen as conceptually opposite. In the context of learning, the use of the term 'learner-friendly' is more appropriate.

The introduction of the concept 'learner' friendly' predicates the significance of educational perspective into the evaluation of CAL software and hardware. In addition, there has been a shift of interest from the traditional teacher-controlled curriculum to learner-centred curriculum in the educational theory and practice. The transmission model of teaching and learning has been challenged on various grounds, particularly by the constructivist who argues that the learners do not just receive knowledge passively. They individually reconstruct knowledge and information presented to them. This shift of focus has implication for CAL as CAL cannot be immuned from educational paradigm shift. CAL developers have to take into account some theoretical orientation in designing their CAL products. For instance, drill-and-practice is commonly used by those with a bahaviorist orientation; whereas educational software with the constructivist orientation tends to place an emphasis on interaction, exploration and creativity. In this case the interpretation of the term 'learner-friendly' is theoretically bound.

It can be argued that CAL software needs to take the learner into account as learners are the key players in the learning process. However, teaching and learning are not separate activities. Teachers are also key players in the educational context. It has been pointed out that there is a shift from teacher-centred to learner-centred curriculum. This does not mean that teachers are outsiders or their role is insignificant. Teachers regardless of their theoretical orientation play a leading role in facilitating learning. Thus, in designing and constructing CAL software or courseware, consideration of teachers' active participation in the teaching process needs to be taken seriously. In some software packages, there is room for teachers to change items or modify the pathways to suit their needs as each teaching activity is unique. This leads to the introduction of the concept 'teacher-friendly' in CAL. A teacher-friendly CAL courseware provides teachers with flexibility as well as clear guidance whenever necessary. It is both a tool and companion that facilitates teachers' teaching, not controlling them.

2. The Motivation principle

Motivation is undoubtedly a determining factor in the learning process. Motivation can be cognitively-oriented and affectively-oriented. The former refers to intellectual stimulation which challenges the powerful mind. A problem-solving task which underestimates the intellectual ability of the user can be an insult to intelligence. For instance, teachers who ask a ten-year-old child the question 'How many legs does a dog have?' commit an educational insult as they do not take the child's cognitive motivation into consideration. Similarly, a CAL package which constantly drills learners on insignificant linguistic aspects or rules (e.g. personal pronouns, plural formation) they have already acquired can easily lead them to boredom.

Affective motivation touches on the feelings and self-esteem of the learner. Children who listen the same story read many times by their parents show the presence of their affective motivation in the interaction with their parents. Learners bring not only intellectual ability but also their feelings to a learning task Affective motivation is often marked by the expression of joy or lack of it. However, these two aspects of motivation, namely cognitive and affective are complementary. They can both provide learners with a purpose, impetus and challenge to pursue the learning task. Children enjoy playing games together when their minds are challenged and their feelings are entertained.

Motivation is therefore a significant factor in the production and evaluation of CAL courseware. The following features and factors are important in the activation of motivation in a CAL courseware: purposefulness, curiosity challenging, reinforcement, humour, and interactivity.

Purposefulness: Each learning task in CAL is designed with an educational purpose such as promoting learning a specific skill, developing knowledge in a curriculum area. Learners need to know what they are introduced to and the reason for it. For instance, what aspects of linguistic awareness are important for education students? Why is the teaching of genre included in the courseware?

Curiosity: One of the main reasons why the WEB is so interesting and helpful to WEB enthusiasts is probably the way it arouses some curiosity in the user's mind. It is not just an information superhighway as it can provide a self-directed journey for users with curiosity to explore the virtual world. In courseware design, curiosity, therefore, should be seen as a motivation for learning.

Challenging: In many computer games, challenging often means competition. Game players are challenged to beat the computer or their competitors or to achieve the highest scores. This kind of motivation is also seen in some learning tasks in traditional CAL such as self- review and testing. However, 'challenging' should not be seen exclusively in terms of competition and testing. Problem-solving can present an intellectual stimulation to learners. In a courseware, learners should not be bombarded with information acquisition and testing. They should be confronted with issues and problems to be discussed, examined and solved. In courseware based on a learner-centred curriculum, task-oriented learning is often used to promote self-discovery and independent thinking.

Reinforcement: Reinforcement is an essential motivation in CAL as it enhances learners' self-esteem. Traditionally, reinforcement in CAL software tends to be rather narrow and automatic. Verbal reinforcements such as 'correct', 'you are right', 'your answer is wrong', 'not right, do it again' etc. are very common. Reinforcement in a courseware should go beyond such automatic feedback to include

notions such as help, supporting resources, provision of opportunities to interact with tutors and other participants.

Humour or fun: Learning and teaching are too serious to be taken mechanically and tediously. Science teaching materials tend to be very impersonal and remote from learners' feeling. A change from this impersonal approach has been adopted in current science teaching materials as in books, articles, and science T.V documentaries. Multimedia with its growing strength has created a world of fun for users in computer games. It should be more so in educational multimedia. Courseware can include interesting features such as cartoons, sounds, puzzles, anecdotes to reinforce learning.

Interactivity: One of the best features of the Internet is not only about its provision of an information superhighway but its interactive power. The notion of interactivity can be confusing and misleading as different writers mean different things. Basically, there are three aspects of interactivity in multimedia and hypermedia:

- *Textual interactivity*: There are various texts within the domain of a program or in the world for learners to explore and make connection. This is represented by the interactive marker affectionately known as 'hot spots'. In a courseware dealing with linguistic awareness, hot spots provide pathways to various issues, aspects, or points in different units or modules of the courseware. In addition, there are also hot spots for learners to contact the outside world such as interesting links to organisations, conferences, journals, clubs, associations etc.

- *Media interactivity*: The word 'multimedia' means the combination of many media in software production. This includes three primary sources: sound, graphic, speech. Graphic, for instance, makes us of visual dimensions, animation, colour creation, shape, size, layers, photo etc. This makes the virtual world closer to the real world.

- *Communicative interactivity*: With the provision of communicative interaction in the WEB, learners are no longer alone with the computer. They can communicate with others by writing, talking, and seeing via the Internet. The increasing power of hypermedia and multimedia enable learners and tutors to negotiate and reconstruct the curriculum through conferencing.

An important aspect of learning is the ability to share ideas through talking with others in various learning contexts about the material and concepts that are to be learned. Learners may wish to discuss and debate various topics and issues both with fellow students and with staff tutors. In order to meet this requirement within an electronic learning environment it is necessary to provide a range of interactive communication tools to support both individual and group communication processes. The most common types of communicative tool in current use are electronic mail, bulletin boards and various forms of computer conferencing software. Electronic bulletin boards provide a 'one-way' communication facility that enables an individual to make information available to others - either publicly or in a closed group. On the other hand, electronic mail provides two-way communication between individuals or an individual and a group. Computer conferencing facilities enable various sorts of 'forum' to be created in which participants can exchange views and ideas on various topics.

The big challenge in the development of this courseware is how to construct a prototype which captures the principles underlying good interface design as well as meaningful teaching practice and learning experience. On the basis of the friendliness principle and the motivation principle, our courseware introduces different learning experiences and resources to learners and teachers. In addition to the content covering various linguistic awareness aspects, learners are introduced to related activities and information. For instance, it includes a section called 'Stimulating Questions' in which students can focus on a question which is of interest to them and pursue it further through various pathways in the courseware. Many questions which are often asked by students should be incorporated into the courseware as they can be intellectually stimulating.

The Courseware Prototype

The courseware consists of the following aspects which are organised systematically into different components: Introduction, Content, Facilitating experiences and Learning experiences.

1. *Courseware access and introduction*

2. *Content sections*: There are four content sections in this courseware: phonology, morphology, syntax and genre.

Each area has the following sub-components:

- A brief introduction to the content area.
- Five items (with links) which can be chosen for study: Modules, Problem solving tasks, Basic terminology, Review, Key references

The Modules consists of five or six lesson-typed presentations. In other words, the modules cover the contents of each learning area.

The review sub component has three parts:

- General introduction to the review: its aim and implications.
- The review in the form of mini-test (true-false choice).
- The results and correct answers are given with specific links to the appropriate modules.

3. *Facilitating experiences*: Stimulating questions, Test, References, Feedback

The facilitating experiences are aimed at providing learners means of consolidating and extending their learning. There are four sub components which are placed on different bars (with links) right under the content sections on the left side of the screen. The facilitating experiences include the followings:

Stimulating questions: This section consists of three parts.

- Brief introduction with aims and suggestions on how to deal with the questions in a learning context.
- The questions: There are six questions which may be of general interest or specifically related to the content areas. The questions were chosen on the basis of curiosity, fun, intellectual stimulation and challenge.
- The answers to the questions: If the learners want to find out the answer, they click at the underlined questions. The answers are written in informal English. There are also references attached to the answers for further learning.

Test: This section consists of questions which are based on the content areas. Learners can use the test first before they attempt to learn from the courseware to find out the background they bring to the courseware. Alternatively, they can leave the test to the end of their learning to test their acquired knowledge in the content areas.

References: This section includes references arranged in an alphabetical order. At the top of the frame, letters of the alphabet (with links) are listed. Learners choose the letter which is the initial letter of the authors' surname. The link will bring the learners to the selected reference.

Feedback: During the process of constructing the courseware, feedback section included a simple frame with three questions for users to give their comments. The questions are:

- What do you like about this courseware?
- What don't you like about this courseware?
- Any remarks/comments/questions you would like to communicate to us?

1. *Learning experiences*: Genre work, resources and on-line help

Genre work: This is the framework which allows learners to turn theory into practice. To undertake this section, learners should have grasped the basic ideas in the content area dealing with genre. The Genre Work section consists of two parts:

- Modeling: learners are guided through a sample dealing with each of the academic genres. Thus, there are four samples covering four genres: report, explanation, exposition and discussion. The modeling has the following stages:

  a. Introducing a model: learners are introduced a text. For example , the sample on exposition genre is about sexist language.
  b. Describing the purpose of the text: This includes a brief statement describing the purpose of the text.
  c. Generic analysis: The analysis is made on two aspects.
     - Generic structure
     - Linguistic features

- *Joint Construction*: After modeling, it is expected that learners have understood different academic genres. The joint construction is the time when learners actually construct the text themselves with the assistance of the lecturer. There are five topics for each of the four academic genres (thus twenty topics altogether). When learners choose a topic, a new frame with subheadings guiding the learners in each stage of the construction and blank spaces provided for learners' writing. When the writing task has been completed, the text can be submitted to lecturer through email by clicking at the submit button.

Resources and on-line help: This consists of two components:

- Interesting locations : Various Web locations directly and indirectly relating to the courseware are given. The list can be expanded regularly.
- Learners' contribution: This facility provides learners with the means to share their finding of interesting Web locations with others. Their contributed Web location information will be added to the interesting locations section mentioned above.

- *On-line Help*: This section includes two parts.

  a). General questions: This includes practical questions , particularly those involving navigation.
  b). Communication: This section provides communicative interaction through Web-based communication board. The discussion is automatically arranged into themes or sub-themes. This is an important tool for virtual seminar.

The Evaluative Process

In regards to the formative aspect, two strategies were employed to ensure that users were involved during the development of the courseware. Firstly, a small reference group was formed to oversee the courseware development. It consisted of a computer specialist, an educational linguist and four students. The reference group met regularly to discuss the progress of the construction of the courseware. Secondly, a feedback form was placed in the courseware itself during the trial stage of introducing the courseware to students. The feedback form was made simple and open-ended so that users could give comments on any points or aspects of the courseware which concern them. On the basis of the feedback received, it was evident that users tended to give comments on specific features of the courseware such as references, font, on-line help, frame etc. Their feedback was considered by the reference group for modification.

Conclusion

The emergence of the Web has introduces to education many advantages but also bring along great challengers to courseware developers. Courseware should be constructed on the premise that it must take into consideration of the perception of students about learning and teaching. Otherwise, courseware can easily become a warehouse for storing experts' treasure but not learners'. In conclusion, it is interesting to quote Thompson's title of her recent conference paper " Let's not forget the learners: meeting students' needs in a technological world" (Thompson 1997, p.461).

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Interlanguage in a university context

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Interlanguage : Theory into Practice

Interlanguage, a term popularised by Selinker (1972), can broadly be described as the in-between language people use while learning a second language. 'Interlanguage refers to the separateness of a second language learner's system, a system that has a structurally intermediate status between the native and target languages' (Brown,1994:203). The term 'interlanguage' has become central in Second Language Acquisition (Larsen-Freeman and Long, 1991), and marks the recognition by researchers that language learners are individuals reflecting an underlying coherent language system. Linguists and researchers have become more concerned about the language learning process than the language learning product.

Interlanguage is, therefore, the personal linguistic system used by all (second and subsequent) language learners until they reach almost native-like competence in the target language. The study of interlanguage is then the study of linguists, language teachers and language students. If interlanguage is taken as being the dynamic transitional language used by people who are attempting to learn a new language, then any language teaching and learning research or practice, is in effect dealing with interlanguage. An understanding and analysis of students' interlanguage can have significant pedagogical implications (Brown,1994). With this knowledge and understanding, language teachers can assist learners to construct an interlanguage that will, in time, move toward the target language.

Recent public demand, particularly from researchers, parent groups and educators, has focused on improving literacy competence of students at different educational levels (Beikoff & Parker, 1996). However, linguistic research on interlanguage with a focus on English for Academic Purposes (EAP) is still under-researched. Consequently, research on the development of interlanguage in Vietnamese students is still in its embryonic stage.

Vietnamese students' Interlanguage

The number of Vietnamese students undertaking training courses at Australian tertiary institutions has increased substantially, partly due to the open door policy adopted by the Vietnamese government since 1986, and partly due to the interest shown by Australian universities and colleges in Vietnam as a potential market for the international student population. Therefore, what are the main problems that Vietnamese students may encounter when they go abroad to study. Ballard and Clanchy (1984) argue that nearly all foreign students who come to Australia to study have problems with English.

The question still remains as to which strategies are facilitative, and how much knowledge of language relates to target language use. In other words, an important issue is to what extent and in what way communication strategies contribute to second/foreign language learning. The present study attempts to identify those strategies which are preferred by Vietnamese students, and how often strategies are used by them in enhancing their Academic English.

For this study, two categories of strategies were examined:

- Concept/Knowledge-based strategies: The learner conveys the concept by exploiting his/her available linguistic resources and world knowledge by using different strategies: circumlocution, exemplification, paraphrase, appeal for assistance, avoidance, guessing, mime, and so on.
- Linguistic-based strategies: The learner gives a formal analysis of the semantic features of the concept by making use of his/her formal knowledge of the target language. The particular concept poses a conceptual constraint and the finite linguistic realisation of its defining features constitutes

a linguistic constraint. Linguistic-based strategies manipulate the learner's linguistic knowledge. These include Literal Translation and L1-Based Synonyms and Word-Coinage.

Aims of the Study

The main aim of this study is to investigate the nature of interlanguage which is manifested in communication strategy production by Vietnamese Non-English-Speaking-Background (NESB) students in relation to their English proficiency in an academic context. Theoretical understanding of interlanguage in this sense is still at the early stage of development in educational linguistics. This study focuses on the theoretical concept 'strategic competence', which contributes to the understanding of the concept 'interlanguage' dealt within recent research on second language learning.

The study attempts to analyse the range of communication strategies employed by students, and to determine their abilities to use these strategies. The study identifies the dominant strategies commonly employed by students in dealing with communication problems. In other words, it examines the frequency and effectiveness of communication strategies (CSs) used in a negotiation task involving non-native and native speakers of English. The study highlights pedagogic issues in relation to understanding the nature and problems faced by tertiary students in academic English.

Research Method

In this research, in order to collect and analyse data, both quantitative and qualitative techniques were used. For data gathering the following tools are used: questionnaire, and interview. The sections that follow describe the participants, from whom the data were collected, the questionnaire as a quantitative tool, and interviews as a qualitative tool.

1. Participants

In this study, the key participants were 50 Vietnamese students studying at the University of Tasmania (UT) and the Australian Maritime College (AMC). It was decided to invite all undergraduate and postgraduate students to participate in the study. The majority of the student population ranged from 18 to 45 years of age. This fact is essential since age is considered as an affective factor in the process of SLA, and contributes to the difficulties encountered by learners.

Since the major aim of the study was the investigation of the linguistic and communicative problems facing Vietnamese students, the English background of the students was also taken into account when they were considered as participants for this research. Vietnamese students whose native tongue is English or who are bilingual in English and Vietnamese since childhood were not included in the research because their problems may not be the same as those students whose English knowledge is limited. A common misassumption among Australian tertiary educators is that students entering tertiary education are competent in English as they have passed the formal English test such as IELS and TOEFL.

2. The Questionnaire

Basically, the questionnaire was made up of three parts. The first aimed at gathering personal background information about the subjects (for example, gender, age, and previous experience with English). The second part asked for information about problems in language use, including every-day use, academic use, and students' attitudes about language use. The third part was concerned with gathering data on students' perceptions of the use of CSs in different contexts, and to seek indicators of the frequency, type, and effectiveness of strategies employed by the students.

These questions/statements are based on a framework of four categories, outlined below:

- General background of participants, eg. personal information, previous experience with English

- Language use and communication problems, eg. problems in every-day language use, problems with academic English use.
- IL communication strategy use in the classroom context, eg. asking for clarification, circumlocution, literal translation, use of synonyms, word-coinage, exemplification, risk-taking, previous knowledge use, and L1-based.
- IL communication strategy use outside the classroom context, eg. asking for confirmation, appeal for assistance, paraphrase, self-repair, paralinguistics (mime), topic avoidance, message abandonment, guessing, and use of hesitation devices.

3. Interviewing

The interviews were informally conducted: ten students including both male and female, undergraduate and postgraduate were interviewed individually at their own homes. It was an informal session lasting approximately twelve or fifteen minutes each, recorded by a micro cassette recorder, and notes taken by the interviewer. This combination allowed the researcher to create a more comfortable and relaxed atmosphere where it was appropriate during the interview.

What does this study reveal?

1. Language and communicative problems facing Vietnamese NESB students in intercultural education settings.

The particular difficulties that Vietnamese students face here are concerned with a new culture, a new educational environment, and most importantly, new language and communicative interaction. Language and communication permeate every aspect of learning, in the lectures as well as the informal class activities elsewhere, and therefore Vietnamese students are disadvantaged as English is not their native language and their disadvantage increases with their lack of competence in English.

The areas of competence in English language are speaking, listening comprehension, reading comprehension, and writing. These four skill areas are helpful for attempting to understand the linguistic and communicative problems encountered by Vietnamese students. However, it is important to identify specific factors which may account for these problems, such as their level of preparedness for the linguistic demands of tertiary education in an Australian university.

The study shows that the language proficiency of students before starting the main subjects in an Australian university was not very high (the means fell between 2.600 and 3.300). However, a comparison of means gained in the four skills indicated that the low listening ability was significant. The fact is that English language learning in Vietnam is considered as learning a foreign language. Not much attention is paid to the communicative approach, particularly on language skill formation.

Listening is essential for formal classes such as lectures, seminars, tutorials and for outside-of-the-class activities. It maybe that because of poor preparation in language proficiency, particularly in listening comprehension, students from a NESB always struggle with language activities requiring aural comprehension. The levels of difficulty contain descriptive statistics of self-evaluation of students' language difficulties when commencing academic courses in English. The means (3.420, 4.180, 3.120, 3.660) show that among speaking, listening, reading, and writing respectively, the most difficult area for students was listening (the mean fell 4.180).

The interview results also provide the same evidence that listening was problematic. In most instances, students who were interviewed, reported that listening in English was the most difficult language skill.

The major problem facing students was understanding all that occurred in university lectures, especially when lecturers spoke quickly and students could not take notes. Fast and long utterances usually make comprehension difficult. Misunderstanding is sometimes caused by native speakers who talk fast with a strong accent, or who talk about difficult concepts. Trying to figure out what people are saying to each other when they lapse into familiar speech is also very difficult. Students found that the common use of slang, acronyms and abbreviations took a great deal of concentration to follow.

Of the same importance as listening, speaking is one of the most essential factors that affects communicative achievements. Apart from interacting with classmates, students may be required to conduct seminars, workshops or presentations in English. Students were much more concerned about their pronunciation (the mean fell on 4.260) when they had to conduct a class presentation. They were concerned about making mistakes (mean = 3.980). This is consistent with the finding that they were reluctant when they had to give talks in front of the class (mean = 3.480).

Vietnamese students are often disadvantaged when it comes to being able to contribute to group discussions because they have difficulty in keeping up with the pace of conversation. Descriptive statistics show that the participants in this study often felt hesitant when using English in conversations, and that they never, or occasionally, were comfortable with and confident of their English use (the means were 2.740 and 2.760 respectively). Speaking in public could be a real threat to them since very few of the Vietnamese students have had any experience of this. When most of the students first arrived in Australia, they had to work hard to maintain communicative competence as they struggled with having to rely almost solely on their limited knowledge of English.

The study shows that the reading skill was highly associated by Vietnamese students with their English language learning and the mean was 3.300. It is reasonable to assume that reading is an immensely preferable learning skill that they employ in order to survive in the Australian educational environment. Most Vietnamese students are aware of their shortcomings in listening and speaking so they compensate for this weakness by doing as much reading as possible. They may spend a lot of time reading lecture notes and recommended books or patiently staring at computer screens. It was interesting to find in this study that Vietnamese students found reading the easiest skill in comparison with the rest of the language skills

Academic writing is another potential problem for Vietnamese students. It is a more serious problem when written work must be done within a limited time, and there are usually restrictions on the use of academic genres. Even students who have a comprehensive knowledge of English grammar may still find their writing skill inadequate for formal writing such as lab reports, essays or assignments required in the Australian tertiary education system. So for Vietnamese students, adjustment to this aspect of communication is a very hard obstacle to overcome.

Writing was the second most difficult area in students' competency of English (the mean fell on 3.660). It is quite probable that Vietnamese students had never taken any academic writing courses even in Vietnamese before coming to Australia. Therefore they had trouble with the more frequent essays needed here, and more importantly, they were unfamiliar with the use of these essays to assess their academic performance. Sometimes copying from text is seen as a legitimate means of combating lack of language competency, particularly for those who have not yet learnt the skills to cope in any other way.

2. The dominant communication strategies frequently employed by Vietnamese students to solve communicative problems in specific interaction contexts.

There was a significant difference (as seen in the mean levels) between the use of concept/knowledge-based and linguistic- based communication strategies.
The highest frequency was in the use of a concept/knowledge-based circumlocution description strategy (eg. when I have difficulty finding the right word, I try to talk round it). The lowest frequency was linguistic-based word-coinage strategy use (eg. when it is difficult to find the right word, I attempt to make up a new one).

The English language knowledge of most Vietnamese students was insufficient, so they tried to compensate for this by relying upon their previous experience. Previous experience involves not only TL knowledge but also learners' general knowledge about the world. In an academic atmosphere Vietnamese students have to accommodate both language instruction and the subject matter of their chosen discipline. So the knowledge-based experience strategy (mean = 3.840) is helpful in solving communicative problems.

Exemplification is one of the preferred concept/knowledge-based CSs used by students when they could not convey the right concept. L1-based strategies do not seem to work effectively since L1 (Vietnamese) is quite distant from TL (English). In their responses to the questions about the difference between Vietnamese and English, the students identified a large distance between the two languages (the mean at 4.380), and little similarity (the mean at 2.360). Literal translation strategies were used by the students in the early stage of language learning. However, L1-based strategies were used in some cases when the time was available. To many Vietnamese, translations between Vietnamese and English are not straightforward exercises, probably because of language distance. They found that they had to simplify the language in its English form before they could clarify difficult concepts or put together ideas into English speech. They always had to think of what they heard and what they were about to say to make sense of conversations they participated in.

Both concept/knowledge-based and linguistic-based CSs were more intensively used outside the classroom context, whereas in the classroom situation, students used concept/knowledge-based CSs most frequently. However, the most preferred CS adopted was paraphrase (the mean at 4.040).

Appeal for assistance or what is sometimes known as cooperative CSs were too frequently adopted, according to the results of data analysis in this study. Appeal for assistance CSs included clarification check, asking for confirmation, and asking for help. In an informal context outside the classroom, where students felt more confident, they made every effort to communicate in English. They join their classmates in chatting during the session break. They do not hesitate to ask salespersons in the supermarket to speak slowly or repeat what they could not follow. They started conversations with local people while waiting for buses. In many ways, having contact with native speakers is advantageous for their English language learning.

There was a significant difference in the communication strategies used by the students who arrived in 1994 and students who arrived in 1998. The amount of time spent learning a new language influenced the level of language proficiency (Ellis,1985). A longer period of exposure, or immersion, to the language and culture of the target language, greatly contributed to selection of strategies suitable to solving communicative problems.

Conclusion

Ellis (1985) argues that all natural languages are unstable, and interlanguage is an unusually unstable natural language. This investigation, as seen from this perspective, is only a small segment of the area of interlanguage communication strategy research. An attempt has been made to examine language and communicative difficulties facing Vietnamese students and coping strategies employed by them. It is hoped that the answers to the research questions described in this study will reveal some new ideas for Vietnamese NESB students to ensure success in their academic life in an Australian university.

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Pegs for literacy: Using 'customer service' as a peg for the delivery of the five macro literacy skills

Ruth Trenerry

Newspaper job advertisements testify to the label Customer Service as a descriptive term for specific work roles in an increasing number of industries and workplaces. My presentation will investigate one language, literacy & numeracy program appropriating this term as part of its total literacy offering.

Contextualising the Communication Literacy/Customer Service Skills Training Program

The competitive tendering process was introduced into labour market literacy provision at a time when literacy was being offered as economic commodity. Being in possession of 'literacy' skills was equated with being employable. Implicit in the Special Intervention Literacy Programs (SIP) was the notion that recipients of the unemployment benefit and with a literacy skills deficit needed 'topping up' to regain employment. Therefore a student accessing SIP literacy programs is (was, given the demise of SIP) unemployed and wanting to develop skills to progress their literacy levels to make them more competitive in the job market. To continue the concept of literacy as commodity, and therefore of literacy courses as a site of purchase, my presentation will discuss how Customer Skills Service Training was integrated into one SIP literacy program.

Background

The program which is the subject for this presentation, Communication Literacy/Customer Service Skills Training, provided a literacy course for stakeholders of the now defunct SIP labour market literacy 'market'. The Centre for Applied Linguistics in the University of South Australia (CALUSA) was successful in the 1995-98 round of SIP tenders and subsequently offered this program. Any explanation as to why CALUSA, a language school, moved into the provision of adult literacy needs to include cognisance of these factors:

- defining literacy for job seeker programs
- the merging of language and literacy funding in the ALLP and the practical and pedagogical implications of this convergence and
- to recognise the need for language schools to investigate the viability of new markets to support their operations.

Defining Literacy

The notion that literacy is only located in reading and writing skills persists, and having or not having adequate reading and /or writing skills is perceived as contingent on successfully maintaining employment. Conversely unemployment has been directly connected to a literacy skills deficit. The last fifty years in Australia has seen the 'literate subject' change in relation to societal demands. From a 'moral' subject in the 1950's, a 'technical/skilled' subject in the 1960's, 'deficit/disadvantaged' in the 1970's to 'economic' subject in the 1980's. This has translated to the perception of a literacy crisis in the 1990's, arguably the result of economic uncertainty and high levels of unemployment. Yet researchers emphasise that it is 'overridingly the case, ... that all Australians now require deeper, broader and higher literacy capabilities than at any other time in the past.' (Lo Bianco & Freebody 1997)

The term literacy has multiple meanings however. Literacy increasingly represents the ability to manipulate a variety of related but distinctive symbolic communications. 'Language Australia' calls the new demands on the literate subject the 'new foundations' of literacy:

- the ability to understand increasingly complex language and literacy codes
- the ability to use multiple modes in which these codes are transmitted and put to use, and
- the capacity to understand the richer and more elaborate meanings they convey (ibid)

Both this definition of literacy and the pedagogic implications across language and literacy provision are relevant to my presentation.

How does a labour market literacy course offer the possibilities for these new foundations?

Literacy skills facilitate communication. The literate subject must have access to literate practices which include powerful forms of literacy in whatever code or mode. Further, as Cope and Kalantzis (1993) confirm, pedagogy should ask the key question 'what is needed for social access' and deliver a critical literacy which provides the possibility of 'inclusion and access'. The Communication Literacy/ Customer Service Skills Training course was to provide a vehicle for the exploration of these questions and issues. An interesting twist surfaces in the nomenclature of this course, labour market adult literacy courses under the tendering process were located within a market oriented discourse. Why not continue the language of the market? Being explicit and using the labels of the market place, as we did with the term Customer Service, proved problematic in the educational context but not for students who chose to access the program. Yeatman (in Threadgold 1994) confirms the idea that those who interpret policy (and the products of policy) must look for 'gaps' or 'openings' and the CSST (as it became known on site) intentionally capitalised on the heteroglossia of government funded literacy programs to deliver what some stakeholders wanted/needed.

The Program:

Students

The course offered tuition in a range of literacies for job seekers whose literacy skills were not in deficit, who were functioning as 'code breakers' (after Luke & Freebody 1993) but did want training as text users, text participants and text analysts. Each student entering the program was unemployed and wanting to upgrade skills and to develop new ones and to investigate pathways into further training. Students were drawn from the range of literacy learner categories; English as first language speakers, students from non-English speaking backgrounds, students who wanted a career change and needed to be in training to satisfy CES requirements, women returning to the workforce after time spent as carers and participants sent from the Commonwealth Rehabilitation Service.

Contact Hours

The CSST course was conducted over 10 weeks with 20 hours of tuition each week. The customised curriculum provided generic literacy modules; writing skills (4 hours), reading skills (4 hours), numeracy skills (2 hours), computing (2 hours) study skills (2 hours) and independent study time in the Resource & Independent Study Centre (RILC min 2 hours). The customer service modules (4 hours) completed the course offering. Total contact time for each student totalled 200 hours. It was anticipated that all students would achieve competency for all modules attempted upon completion of the course. The pre-training assessment determined whether or not this course was appropriate for potential students.

Customer Service

For the purposes of this discussion I will now focus on the Customer Service Skills Training section of the course. Although Customer Service is a descriptive term for specific work roles in an increasing number of industries (as weekly job advertisements in the newspaper testify) it is used as a generic title in the CALUSA course. The customer service modules developed student competence in:

- human relations awareness
- working in a team
- effective communication
- dealing with customers and
- time management

Over these 10 weeks the following customer service and job search teaching was timetabled:

Customer Service	Job Search
What is Customer Service?	Resumes
Who is a Customer?	Biographies
What do customers want?	Goal Setting
Interpersonal Communication/Communication Models	Barriers to Employment
Stereotyping	Interview Techniques
Professionalism/Attitude	Question & Role Play Scenarios
Public Speaking Tips	What do interviewers look for?
Non-verbal Communication	Team Building
Barriers to Effective Communication	Telephone Techniques
Listening/Questioning and Feedback Skills	
Conflict Resolution	Videoed Interviews
Assertiveness Training	Personal Marketing Strategies
Stress Management	Interviews with CALUSA's Director
Time Management	
Public Speaking	Using Faxes, Photocopiers & Phone Systems
Course Evaluation	Graduation Ceremony to be organised by students

Customer Service is a concept. The following questions frame the sessions outlined above.

What is customer service? Who is a customer/client? Who/what is a provider? What are service industries? What is the nature of the service act? What models of communication exist and which ones do I/we practise? What are the various mediums of communication in our community? How do I/we maintain the competitive edge when seeking employment/in our working lives? How do I/we handle a communication breakdown? How does what I say and how I say it impact on the listener/receiver? What role does body language play in the communication process? Do I understand behavioural cues when communicating with others at work/at home etc? Is assertive behaviour and aggressive behaviour the same? How do I process information? What is effective listening? Can I develop a more confident phone manner? What is professionalism?

By addressing these questions (and more) in the teaching and learning situation the literacy student gains an understanding of the communication process. The teacher's role as catalyst for students adopting a meta-language is critical. The CSST program was constructed to facilitate this.

Conclusion

In my conference presentation I want to provide a stronger framework than appears in this discussion as to the value of the communication literacy /customer service skills training course. Finally, the secretariat of the OECD recognises three competency domains - intellectual, psycho-social and practical. The CSST course described has attempted to pull the threads of these three domains together to start (or continue) the process for students of recognising the interrelated nature if all three in

practical. The CSST course described has attempted to pull the threads of these three domains together to start (or continue) the process for students of recognising the interrelated nature if all three in education, training, work and community life, and that the language which represents these systems is mutable, not fixed.

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Using email as a 'backdoor' to literacy

Ian Walker
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Introduction

Using email is becoming an increasingly familiar activity for adults and children in a range of settings including the workplace, the home and educational institutions. This paper describes how it is currently being used to assist some secondary students, who have experienced difficulty in reading and writing English, to develop more positive attitudes towards, and skills in, literacy. The students attend a high school on the island of Maui and are being encouraged by one of the authors [John] to email to the other author [Ian]. Through this electronic exchange, the students are developing not only the skills of writing, reading and individual research but, perhaps more importantly, are gaining in self-esteem as they become more effective communicators. These students, best described as 'reluctant readers and writers', are gaining the power that literacy offers, albeit 'through the backdoor'.

How it all began

Earlier this year one of the authors [Ian] visited Maui and, whilst there, paid a visit to a secondary school in order to see how one of his former graduate students [the other author, John] was doing. John was teaching 'remedial' English to a group of year 9 students. A major challenge for him was to find ways of building up these students' literacy knowledge and skills so that they could use English to achieve their own purposes. Essentially, the students were reluctant to learn and John, having abandoned the traditional 'worksheet' exercise, was experimenting with a number of more authentically grounded activities and experiences.

It wasn't until Ian returned to his university in Melbourne that the idea of using email as a means of motivating and assisting the students to write developed. The project was presented to the students and, as a result, emails were soon being sent in both directions across the Pacific. Later in the year Ian again visited Maui and spent some time with the students and their teacher working with the students in developing their emails.

Using email as a 'backdoor' to literacy

There is discussion presently taking place in the literature which is concerned with the place of technology and, by implication, email within current views of literacy. Certainly, some more recent definitions either implicitly or explicitly locate computer technology within literacy's boundaries. In Victoria, for example, the body responsible for school curricula admit that the:

> *increasing use of technological tools has implications for literacy acquisition and development. New and emerging needs such as 'computer literacy' mean that different uses of literacy need to be considered in the classroom.* (Board of Studies, 1995:9-10)

Interestingly, some of the discussion in the literature has moved beyond simple inclusions of computer-related activities and skills within literacy's definition to become centred on the extent to

which email, for example, can be conceptualised as representing a new literacy genre (see for example, Moran and Hawisher in Snyder, 1998, Spooner and Yancey, 1996, Tao, 1995).

At the same time it is worth being reminded of the importance of recognising and, indeed, confronting contradictions in literacy practice that has been accepted as part and parcel of living and working in a post-modern world (Giroux, 1988, Graff, 1986, Heath, 1983). This is certainly true in the context of the

present discussion. Alongside of current and broad definitions of literacy which include visual and computer skills there exists the reality of literacy as it is being practised in individual classrooms, homes or workplaces. Downs and Fatouros (1995), for example, capture this contradiction when they remark that whilst computers have become integrated into everyday life and whilst concepts of literacy must be broadened to include the knowledge and processes needed for people to participate effectively in an electronic world

> *too few [school children] are learning in their classrooms how to use recently developed information and communication tools. In most classrooms today literacy is still defined exclusively in terms of paper-based texts. (1995:3)*

The key purpose of the project being discussed here was to enable a group of students who had personal histories of failure in reading and writing to improve their use of literacy through the use of email. The authors considered that doing this would not only provide these students with an opportunity to enter the electronic world (and possibly for some of them, their only opportunity) but, at the same time, to develop their literacy skills and knowledge thereby enhancing their self-esteem. As these students had to a large extent 'been turned off' reading and writing through their earlier negative English experiences, it was hoped that they would not realise that they were, in fact, 'doing English' as they researched, read, talked and wrote via the email.

The case of Arthur

The degree to which the project was successful can best be determined through a detailed analysis of one student, referred to as Arthur in this paper, as he participated in the project. Arthur is currently enrolled in all special education classes at King Kekaulike High School. In his previous English class he received a Fail grade and after consultation with school administrators, parents and teachers, it was decided that he would switch to John's remedial English class at the end of January 1998. His self-esteem was very low and, not surprisingly, in class Arthur was very hesitant to take risks in learning.

What follows is the first four email exchanges between Arthur and Ian, accompanied by comments made by the authors to contextualise the emails and uncover what they suggest about Arthur's development as a language user and learner. In each of the emails presented, where possible, the original layout, spelling and grammatical structures have been maintained. Emails are indicated by a leading > (Spooner and Yancey, 1996).

Email exchange 1

> *>Dear Mr. Walker,*
> *My name is [Arthur ...]. I am in the 11th grade. I am writing to you because Iwant to learn about Australia. For example, what kind of games do they have over there. I know you because you came over here, to see your student, John Colfin. I wish you could come back here again. I would like to learn more about Australia.*
> *Sincerly, [Arthur]*

John's intention for Arthur's first email was to have him introduce himself to Ian and, in doing so, to include some basic information about himself. An examination of Arthur's email above shows that he chose to use his first email as an opportunity to seek information about Australian games and to tie his email to Ian's previous visit to his school in Maui. This email was produced on Arthur's first day in the remedial English class while his peers were completing another activity. Arthur was showing signs of unease with his classmates but enthusiastically approached the email task. It is not certain, however, whether a draft was written prior to Arthur hitting the keyboard. Ian was delighted that the email project was underway and forwarded an immediate response, part of which is shown below, to Arthur.

>Dear [Arthur]
Hi. First of all you can call me Ian. Congratulations on being the first in your class to email to Australia...
Football is very popular in Melbourne. I think even John, when he was in Melbourne, followed one of the teams. Ask him which one - I think they came bottom! The game is very fast and quite different to Gridiron (is that how you spell it?)...
...Let me know in another email if you want exact details of these games and I'll hunt around for some information to bring with me.

Ian was aware, having met Arthur in another class in Maui and through discussions about him with John, that Arthur had very low self-esteem. Ian's main objective in the above reply was to establish an informal dialogue between Arthur and himself. This is seen, for example, in the introductory praise given to Arthur for participating in the project and in the rather 'humanising' reference to his teacher. A secondary objective, the attempt by Ian to model literacy learning for Arthur, is noted in the spelling query about Gridiron and the sentence relating to the need for Ian to do research.

Email exchange 2

At the end of Ian's reply to the first email he asked Arthur to tell him something about himself. This led to the following response from Arthur:

>Dear Mr. Walker,
How are you doing? It is me [Arthur]. I'm writing to you because I am going to tell you about myself. I like to play sports and doing weights. I have a sister, a mom, and a dad. On the weekend's I do bowling every Saturday. Or if there is nothing about to do, I do exercise, like lift 80 pounds every day and 50 pushup's. If there is't nothing to do on the weekend's, I find something to do. Sometimes I like to do fishing. It is really fun. Well that is everything about me.
Now I am going to tell you about Maui. I'm am reading this book. It is called Myths and Legends of Maui. the author is W.D. Westervelt. I am going to tell you some Legends of Maui. Like Maui the Fisherman, Maui Lifting the Sky,Maui,Maui Snares the Sun,Maui finds fire. Tell me which one you want to learn about?
Aloha, [Arthur]

In addition to providing some information about his family and his out of school activities (evidence of email being used for authentic purposes), Arthur takes on the role of enquirer, perhaps teacher, rather than respondent in his second paragraph. The authors interpret this as evidence of Arthur becoming more empowered as a literacy user through this activity, although it is worth noting that his risk-taking at this stage has not progressed enough for him to adopt the less formal greeting of 'Ian'.

Ian's response to this email acknowledged Arthur's status of enquirer as Ian adopted the role of respondent, providing Arthur with some information about his own family and selecting one of the Maui legends 'to learn about'. At the end of the email, Ian endeavours to reinforce Arthur's importance to the project and to enhance his standing amongst his peers.

>[Arthur], do you think you could encourage some of the other students to email me? I enjoy getting your emails and writing responses to them and they might also like it.

Email exchange 3

At this point in the project, John is able to comment that Arthur is keen to turn on the computer at the beginning of class to see if there is a message from Ian, a sure sign that this activity was changing Arthur's attitude to himself as a literacy learner. A routine had become established where once Arthur

had read Ian's email, a copy was printed and Arthur would return to his desk to write down what information Ian had requested. At this stage, John was not concerned about spelling, punctuation or grammar as he wanted Arthur to enjoy the writing experience and to become more willing to take risks with his writing.

The authors' experience suggests that the skills of spelling, grammar or punctuation are not easily dealt with using email as the literacy vehicle. It would seem that, at least in specific contexts, email inherits many of the linguistic features of informal oral and written dialogue (for example, quickly written notes and telephone messages) where these sorts of 'surface feature' skills play a secondary role.

Arthur's third email illustrates this by its freshness, immediacy and, indeed, its authenticity (note the changed greeting) at the expense of orthographic finesse.

> *>Dear Ian*
>
> *Thanks for your a email and telling me about yourself. I forgot to tell you about my family. My sister is younger than me. I know how it feels to lose someone, my mom's dad died on 1996. He was nice, half of the town know him. He fought in the Korean war, he was a Lieutenant I have 5 cats, and 1 dog. Their are very nice animals. Their names are spice,Tom,Tigger,Bruno, and Samson. The dog is Angel. She is so smart, she can talk to you. That is everything about my family. You mentioned if I played bowling in door's. Yes I do play indoor's and I am a member of a team. Or sometimes I play socially. I made the tournment, my highest score is 168.*
>
> *sincerly,*
> *[Arthur]*
> *p.s. I well tell you about later the story later. But I need do homework.*

Ian's response to this was itself a mixture of the personal *'You do have a lot of cats don't you? I remember that your teacher has a cat named 'Boots' at his house so perhaps you can discuss 'cats' with him sometime...'* and a more formal account of an aboriginal story *'During the Dreamtime the earth was in darkness and it was not only very black but also very cold...'* It must be admitted that in writing this account, a copy of the story was, in fact, copied and included in the email. This is worth noting in relation to Arthur's following email and in the authors' discussion of it.

Email exchange 4

In his fourth email, Arthur tells the story of Maui lifting the sky. It is not necessary to include this email here as it was simply a copy of a written text. Ian's initial reaction on receiving this was one of disappointment; the power that Arthur had displayed in his previous email appeared to have vanished. However, on reflection, it had to be acknowledged that Arthur was merely mirroring what Ian had done in his email about the Dreamtime. Further insight into this seemingly problematic email is gained from John's own reflection of the events leading up to it.

John had initially asked Arthur to read an account of the legend of Maui lifting the sky and to retell it to him in his own words, something Arthur did successfully. However when he was asked to write his own version of the legend, he found this to be too difficult and John, observing his frustration, allowed him to copy the story from the text (*'as the legend is quite lengthy, it helped develop his typing skills' [John]*).

It would seem, from an examination of Arthur's developing and multiple email voices, that he contributes to the academic debate, mentioned earlier about the extent to which email represents a new genre. In Arthur's case he combines different voices (even in his account of the legend he still manages to include something of the personal - *'Now I'm going to tell you about the story...Well that is the end of the story so I well[sic] see you later'*) and uses email as a vehicle for a number of linguistic genres.

Ian's response to this email was to focus on one element *'a great black rock'* and to attempt to return Arthur to his own experience by asking him *'Is the "great black rock" the one you look at just in front of the Brick Palace (or what's left of it) at Lahaina? Can you let me know?'*

It is at this point in the exchange between Arthur and Ian that John was able to comment that he was noticing Arthur's self-esteem becoming increasingly stronger and that, in class, he was showing enthusiasm towards learning and having more interaction with his peers. As other students began to inquire about his emails he was perhaps feeling special and making *'a unique addition to our class'[John].*

It was at this stage that Ian again visited the class and when Arthur met Ian in the hallway, he was very excited and had many questions to ask him. *'It was the most excited I have seen [Arthur] all year' [John].* During Ian's visit, the email project was introduced to Arthur's classmates. Arthur's first email to Ian was used as a model and students were asked to prepare a draft of their own introductory emails which were consequently sent to Ian. An interesting insight into Arthur's rather fragile self-esteem is gained from the authors' recollections that, while the other students were emailing, Adam asked Ian *'Why are other students emailing you? I thought it was just you and me!'* to which Ian replied *'We're using yours as an example.'* This seemed to satisfy Arthur and the email exchanges continued.

Conclusions and implications for adult literacy

The project's success, particularly as a means of Arthur entering literacy by the 'backdoor', can be judged by the fact that, when Ian had left Maui (on his way to Canada), Arthur would ask John daily when Ian would return to Australia so that he could send him his next email; the first of which became one produced for the first time without a hand written draft.

Although other students were initially reluctant to take up the opportunity to email Ian in Australia, when they did so they displayed an enthusiasm and developing skill similar to that of Arthur. Clearly this experience suggests that while emails may not be the most appropriate vehicle for the explicit development of spelling, grammar and punctuation (although these skills could be addressed using students' emails as a useful grounding or authentic 'approximation' [Cambourne, 1988]), they provide an excellent vehicle for students with a history of failure to claw back some of their self-respect as learners and gain power as literacy users. In this case the 'backdoor' proved to be more inviting than a continual and fruitless 'banging on literacy's front door'.

The authors believe that the email project reported here lends itself to use within the adult literacy context as a means of not only enabling adults to gain further access to and experience with electronic technology in a very personal way but also of enhancing their perception of themselves as empowered literacy users. The fact that email has global usage raises a number of interesting issues including its potential to provide almost unlimited world-wide access to adults and children seeking assistance with their literacy development. For some, the opportunity to attend to their literacy needs and plans within the relative anonymity that this medium can provide may well be an added incentive for practitioners and researchers to explore. As people's literacy growth and enhancement continues, whether amongst adults or children, one can look forward to email becoming a 'frontdoor' rather than a 'backdoor' for literacy.

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Sweet words: a case study in a confectionery enterprise

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This case study documents the integration of a long term language and literacy project with vocational training and its part in contributing to employees' career paths, facilitating workplace change, achieving enterprise goals and implementing communicative strategies at Haigh's Pty Ltd. S.A.

The strategies and methodologies used to integrate language and literacy with vocational training were considered successful by the enterprise over the five years of implementation. This paper highlights the factors impacting on the success of the model of training in a small business enterprise.

Background

Haigh's Pty Ltd is a South Australian based company which has been manufacturing confectionery for over eighty years. It is a very specialised workplace producing labour-intensive, high quality and exquisite products. When the language and literacy training first started in 1994, it employed twenty operators at the factory, expanding to about 25 at the moment. It is a small enterprise sharing many of the training traditions of small businesses, eg:

- difficult to afford formal training, or training is often provided in an ad hoc manner
- language and literacy training is often not recognised as a priority when compared with other training which has more instant and visible results
- not being able to have specialised company training personnel.

The program at Haigh's originated from this background. It is an example of how the commitment of all the parties concerned overcame the barriers and contributed to the implementation of workplace change in a small business.

Workplace Changes at Haigh's

As in all other Australian industries, Haigh's has been undergoing a time of major change. The major workplace change initiatives in 1994 - 95 included:

- quality accreditation
- team work
- multi-skilling
- enterprise agreement

When the management of Haigh's was planning change and innovation, the demands that the reform would place on al workers' language and literacy skills were highlighted. The management realised that some employees lacked the communication skills to take part in the change process and decided to support employees in their learning of new ways of operating. Subsequently, Workplace Education Service of Adelaide TAFE was involved in addressing the communication issues. In the first year, the training program targeted 25% of the workforce who needed the language and literacy support. In order to gain the whole enterprise's recognition of the training, supporting strategies were critical.

Supporting Strategies

In retrospect, the supporting strategies which have been identified as successful included:

- Identify effective communication as a key factor in workplace change by the management.
- Consultation with the Food and Beverage Industry Training Council to ensure the proposed training fitted into the state and the national curriculum guidelines for the food processing industry. The outcomes of the pilot program were ensured to complement the standards of the Certificate in Food Processing.
- Identify the existing workplace requirement of workplace tasks at all levels and using this information to develop training plans. It also involved the auditing of tasks involving language and literacy skills and subsequently planning the course around the core competency standards.
- The objectives, content and outcomes of the training were directly linked to the four major areas of change to be implemented at Haigh's.

Plain English Training for Team Leaders

The management acknowledged that the success of communication partly depended on both management and employees' ability and willingness to communicate clearly. The positive outcomes of this training has demonstrated that improved workplace language and literacy skills if complemented by improved communication practices in the organisation would lead to improved performance in every facet of work life and added to improvements in equality and productivity.

Communication Policy

To promote everyone's responsibility in effective communication, the Project Officer and the management developed a Communication Policy for the enterprise. The Policy detailed goals, objectives strategies and outcomes under five performance areas:

- Communication style and practices
- Cross -cultural communication
- English language, literacy and numeracy training
- Team work
- Workplace and industrial change

It was recognised that the Communication Policy was a long-term goal for the enterprise. The commitment to put the strategies into practice was not the sole responsibility of the management. It involved every one at every level in the workplace. The endorsement of the Policy demonstrated that the management was dedicated to a holistic approach to improving the communication of the enterprise.

Establishment of a Training Culture

When the training was initiated in 1994, only 25 % of the workforce who were identified as having language and literacy difficulties took part. The Project Officer trialed different ways of making the program part of mainstream training and eventually gained the acceptance of the legitimacy of the program. It meant that the training program has become an integral part of the workplace everyday practice.

The Project Officer worked hand-in hand with the Production Manager who was heavily involved in the training by conducting the on-the-job training and assessment.

Methodology

In a small enterprise, grouping of trainees at different times was not an option. To cope with the disparate language and literacy levels and needs of the trainees in a group, a wide range of methodologies had to be adopted.

Peer tutoring was effective to get wider involvement when some workers and team leaders were willing to give support to those in the group training.

Individual and self-paced learning has been adopted for the more self-directed learners to maximise the outcomes. This methodology was critical for a small enterprise when releasing 5 workers for training meant that 25% of the workforce was not on the production line.

The *Hygiene and Sanitation Policy* for the enterprise was developed taking into account of the input by the trainees at the completion of the module "Hygiene and Sanitation" of the Certificate in Food Processing. The participative approach has demonstrated the relevance of the training to the work practice of the enterprise, not only valued by the trainees, but by everyone in the workplace.

Achievements

The training program at Haigh's has gone a long way since its inception in 1994. For those workers who need language and literacy support, the training has been successful in integrating language and literacy skill with food processing training. The program throughout the years has enabled those workers to develop the vocational competence in confectionery process in parallel with language and literacy skill. At the end of 1997, the trainees completed the five generic modules. By the end of this year, all the workers in the program would finish Level I of Certificate in Food Processing (CFP).

Vocational training has been established as a culture at Haigh's. It has been the goal of the enterprise to provide training for all the employees to gain accreditation of the AQF Level I of the CFP. The new Enterprise Agreement has committed all employees to that level of training , with the option of moving up to Level Two. Wages were also linked to the AQF qualifications obtained. Through the process of self-paced learning and recognition of current competencies, the rest of the workforce has also completed the generic modules. It was expected by the end of 1998, every employee would complete the Level I training.

With the support of the management, the employees have participated in the policy development and the change processes of the enterprise. Now everyone gained the awareness of the relevance of the language, and literacy training with the CFP which in turn was critical to the continuous striving for best practice in the workplace.

Conclusion

Training in the Certificate in Food processing continues at Haigh's Pty Ltd. The initial long term goals set up the management and the Project Officer in 1994 have been realised. The strategies and methodologies outlined in this paper have undoubtedly played a major role in bringing the training to a success. They would continuously be modified and adopted to suit the changing demands of the enterprise.

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Benchmarking to success

A benchmark for the successful implementation of literacy training in the Australian workplace

John Welch

John Welch was the Research Consultant who conducted the Benchmarking Study on behalf of the Forest Industries Training and Advisory Board Inc. (FITAB) as part of the ANTA 1997 Demonstrating Best Practice in VET National Project.

Demand For Literacy Skills

Recent changes in Australian industry have focussed the need to improve workers English language and literature skills. Nowhere was this more evident that in the Forest and Forest products industry. The increased use of technology, demand for higher workplace safety standards and the need to compete in the national and global market place has placed even greater demand for improved literacy skills for workers in the Forest and Forest products industry. Additionally, relevant literature suggests companies may waste up to two thirds of their training budget because workers cannot benefit from training due to language and literacy difficulties. Given that almost $4B is spent annually on vocational training in Australia there was a need to isolate where possible, best practice processes, which make for the successful implementation of workplace language and literacy training.

The Benchmarking Topic

To improve the levels of language and literacy of workers, Hyne & Son embarked on a Workplace English Language and Literacy (WELL) Training program in 1994. The Hyne & Son WELL program reflected some best practice principles for which the company was awarded Queensland Employer of the Year as part of the 1996 State Training Awards.

The experience of the Forest Industry Training and Education Consortium, (FITEC), in the implementation of WELL training and the success of Hyne & Son in winning the award was a major factor in deciding to benchmark the workplace English literacy training approach adopted by Hyne & Son.

This study identified the benchmark in the successful implementation of workplace English language and literacy training and then compared the approach used by Hyne & Son to that benchmark.

Benchmarking Partners

Having identified workplace English language and literacy implementation as being a generic process across many industries and across international boundaries and having chosen the generic process benchmarking model potential partners were identified in a range of industries. Potential partners were selected on the basis of having implemented "successful" workplace literacy programs.

Success was determined by a combination of the following:

- a review of documented case studies of the companies concerned;

- interviews and testimonials from participants; and
- recommendations from language and literacy experts.

Additionally, benchmarking partners were, like Hyne & Son, large companies that had implemented significant workplace English language and literacy programs.

Knowledge of the involvement of the Australian benchmarking partners came from previous FITEC involvement in the implementation of WELL programs. In the United States of America, benchmarking partners were identified by contacts made by two of the benchmarking team while attending the American Vocational Association Convention held in Las Vegas from 11-14 December 1997. While benchmarking partners in New Zealand were identified through the links FITEC had with the National Industry Training Organization (ITO) for the forest industry in New Zealand.

Three partners were selected from the United States, two from Australia and three from New Zealand. They are summarized below.

Benchmarking Partners

Partner	Country	Forest Industry	Non Forest Industry
Company A	USA	√	
Company B	USA		√
Company C	USA		√
Company D	Australia		√
Company E	Australia	√	
Company F	New Zealand		√
Company G	New Zealand	√	
Company H	New Zealand		√

Methodology Used

The type of benchmarking chosen for this study was generic process benchmarking. Comparisons were made in the process of workplace English language and literacy implementation in those companies in the Forest and Forest products industry, like Hyne & Son, and also in companies that were outside the forest industry.

The project team conducted two literature reviews firstly a review of benchmarking and secondly a review of WELL. Each review included scoping interviews with key stakeholders and practitioners.

Focussing on a previous paper by FITEC on "Best practice processes for the Successful Implementation of Workplace Language and Literacy programs in the Forest and Forest Products Industry", the initial research was planned around a significant body of literature on WELL and WELL programs. Although the FITEC paper was to form the cornerstone of this research it was to be complemented with scoping interviews with key stakeholders involved in WELL research and WELL training programs in Australia, the United States of America and New Zealand. The reviews identified a series of best practice indicators that were used to create a survey instrument. This instrument was administered to each company identified as an appropriate benchmarking partner.

A second literature review including scoping interviews with benchmarking practitioners in the United States of America helped in formulating the benchmarking plan and methodology.

The literature review and scoping interviews identified best practice indicators related to the implementation of WELL programs. These best practice indicators were categorised to assist in the data analysis and structure of the questionnaire. The categories, in accordance with the findings in the

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benchmarking literature search, were to be known as the critical success factors. These critical success factors were:

1. The need for WELL training established.
2. Marketing and promotion of the WELL training program in the workplace.
3. The desirable characteristics of the trainer.
4. The most suitable training environment.
5. The most suitable method of training delivery.
6. The desirable characteristics of the training provider.

Answers were recorded on the survey/questionnaire and were placed on a word chart for the relevant critical success factor. To help in further analysis, answers to questions were recorded in table format against those best practice indicators for each critical success factor. If five or more of the nine companies confirmed that a best practice indicator identified in the literature review was also a best practice for them then that best practice indicator was included in the benchmark.

Consequently, a comparison of each benchmarking partner against the best practice indicators provided the data for analysis and finally the benchmark.

The best practice indicators used by Hyne & Son were then charted against the benchmark with the word charts providing the data for comparison.

The Findings

- All benchmarking partners had an established need to improve the literacy skills of workers before commencing any workplace literacy programs. The benchmark identified the need to work in teams and competency based training as the main reason given for the need for WELL training.

- The majority of companies used an open non-threatening approach using workplace terminology when promoting WELL training. The use of promotional literature with follow up presentations in company time was a common method used to market the WELL training program. Additionally, key people were used to market the WELL training programs and participation was voluntary.

- The majority of companies felt it was important to have a trainer with qualifications in adult language and literacy training. Additionally, it was felt by the majority of companies in this study that the personal characteristics of the workplace English language and literacy trainer were also of paramount importance. These characteristics were respect for fellow workers and their need for confidentiality, flexibility, and patience. Other characteristics were being enthusiastic, a belief in the process, being able to work to industry conditions and having competent communication skills.

- All companies involved in the study without exception preferred all WELL training to be conducted on site and use workplace texts in the training material. Also, there was preference for a room to be set aside for employees to access resources and make contact with the tutor/trainer in order to preserve privacy and confidentiality. Additionally, a supportive environment (non-threatening) was also seen as important.

- The majority of benchmarking partners also felt that training delivered needed to be client focussed and flexible to accommodate such things as shift rosters. Additionally, training delivered in small groups or on a one-to-one basis was preferred.

- All companies that participated in the study felt that the training provider needed to be experienced in the delivery of WELL training with a proven track record. Additionally, the majority of companies saw being cost effective and client focussed, as essential characteristics desired to a training provider.

- The majority of companies involved in the study had anecdotal evidence of positive outcomes as a result of WELL training. These outcomes as a result of improved literacy skills for workers were the ability to communicate better, improved team performance, improved self-esteem and confidence. Increased participation at work and improved presentation skills were further outcomes. Only one company in the study had successfully quantified positive outcomes in terms of increased productivity.

Future Directions

More research could be conducted in developing a set of criteria to assist industry in selecting WELL trainer providers. Even though there has been some research in Australia, which has investigated the links between productivity increases to WELL training, even more research could be done in documenting this. Further, more research could be done with a larger population of companies to validate the findings of the benchmarking study.

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PANEL PAPER

Between a rock and a hard place: challenges for a national literacy organization

Jennifer Horsman

In these notes I plan to raise two key challenges I see for a national literacy organization. I speak as a Canadian and my main source for selecting these issues is my own experience in Canada. So I offer them for you to assess whether, or to what extent, they should be central concerns in your context.

Shaping the Literacy Agenda

A national literacy organization is frequently called upon to react to government initiatives, sometimes to fight them, and usually, eventually, to participate in implementing them. Regular responses to new developments can easily take up everyone's energy, leaving little time for taking a proactive stance. Nevertheless, I think it is important for a national organization to also propose policy, frame debate and push a literacy agenda from the perspective of practitioners in the field. It is not enough just to argue that illiteracy is a problem which must be addressed. A national organization needs to be in the forefront of discussion to develop nuanced understandings of the issues.

In Canada, at any rate, as our provincial governments have become more aggressive in seeking to shape and monitor literacy programming, at the same time as cutting funding for most of the social safety net, the tendency is for our provincial and national organizations to be primarily reactive, divided between carrying out government initiatives, and anxiously defending the importance of literacy, in the hope of averting funding cuts. While this work is important, I fear that the cost is a loss of direction in leading and shaping the literacy agenda.

Prioritizing an Equity Agenda

In particular, a national literacy organization like ACAL must be proactive in furthering an equity agenda. Assessing government policies in terms of equity issues, to see how new directions will affect different groups, is crucial. Will a policy have a different impact on different ethnic groups, on those of different abilities, those in different regions or urban or rural locations, men and women? These differences may apply to literacy workers and to learners. I think a literacy organization has responsibility to monitor government policies, to examine its own approaches and to monitor itself. How is the organization representing literacy workers and learners who are racialized or Indigenous people? Is the organization drawing attention to the diversity of learners? Has it allowed any group to become sidelined in new policy directions? In Canada, for example, learners with intellectual disabilities are easily excluded from programs where the pressure for observable outcomes makes learners who progress quickly an asset, and the field as a whole has been largely silent on this issue.

Has the organization examined itself critically and looked at the field in terms of anti-racist policies? Who are the literacy workers and who are the learners? Do literacy workers represent the range of ethnicities in the country, and especially the range of learners? Recognizing the diversity of the field and serving and supporting all learners and workers may not always be an easy task when interests conflict. Yet challenging our own organizations, the field broadly and government policy makers, to be oriented towards equity is, I believe, an approach that should underlie all other work.

Revealing Complexity In Literacy Work

Over the past few years in Canada there has been an increasing "professionalization" of the literacy field. Our associations have led the way in seeking recognition of literacy workers and have encouraged the delineation of a core list of competencies for literacy work. We are moving towards accreditation for literacy workers. For me, these developments are disturbing, not because I am not eager to see literacy work recognized but because there are several problems with this route. As we seek to identify the work involved in literacy, many of the important intangibles disappear. For example, the ability to accomplish the sort of a political analysis that helps us to avoid sliding into a "deficit approach", avoid seeing literacy problems as simply individual skill deficits and avoid patronizing learners, is not likely to appear on a list of literacy workers' competencies. The empathy and compassion to understand another person's problems and to treat that person with full respect in spite of society's common judgement of the inferiority of those who are illiterate, the clear boundaries that help a work to avoid "rescuing" learners in crisis, the "skills" to help a learner see their own strengths, all these might also not be visible "competencies" in a focus on literacy work narrowed to the concrete "skills" necessary to teach basic literacy.

With an emphasis on professionalization, the field can easily becomes polarized around the focus of literacy work. The divide is between those who focus on "caring and sharing", or the community activist, and the "professional" educator. I think it is extremely important for a national literacy organization to fight for a recognition of the work involved in literacy, but I am cautious about a simplistic professionalization that can easily lose the nuances involved in the more intangible aspects of literacy work. Instead, I would argue for textured accounts that make the complexity more, instead of less, visible and reveal the many diverse facets of literacy work. Then we can fight for recognition of the value of that complex picture of work.

Where instructors are overworked, underpaid, and undervalued - perhaps expected to survive by piecing together part time jobs and operating out of the trunk of the car - activities that support literacy workers, recognize the value of their work and help workers to maintain their energy and keep their "spark" of enthusiasm alive, will be crucial. At the same time, organizations need to argue for a proper recognition of the value of literacy work and make the cost of such work practices to workers far more visible than is often the case.

Literacy Learning

Just as the nuances of literacy work easily disappear, the nuances and complexity of what literacy students are learning, can also vanish from view when the emphasis is on "outcomes". It is almost hard to see how one can possibly criticize a direction to make the outcomes of learning clear to student, teacher and funder alike. Yet, here in Canada, the new demands workers are experiencing to document outcomes, not only adds to the workload, but also creates further problems for learners. One very obvious danger is that those who cannot show progress fast enough are seen as wasting time, or wasting money, and are not appropriate literacy students.

Many years ago in Canada there was a great furor that we were heading to a situation of "train the best shoot the rest." I haven't heard that phrase recently, but I wonder why not, when many workers are worrying that the learners who stay a long time in literacy programs and seem to show little change in their literacy levels, will no longer have a place in literacy programs. In particular, those with intellectual disabilities who may be maintaining their literacy level through attending a program, rather than making major leaps in skill level, are at risk in such an approach. Yet when workers have tried to argue that there are foundation "skills" that such learners are acquiring even when they seem to be making little literacy progress, they have found that new problems emerge. Seeking to articulate "skills" such as 'learning to listen in a group' can lead to a somewhat patronizing approach - training students to 'fit in', to behave 'properly' - that loses the critical edge of literacy work.

Similarly, those who have lived through trauma find that experience has a major impact on their learning. These effects lead to a wide range of "learning" that a trauma survivor must cope with which is often invisible, but crucial for literacy learning. For example staying "present" in terms of attention to the class may be extremely hard for many students, even learning to recognize when they are unable

to attend and be fully "present" may be challenging and important learning. Doing the work to be ready to think about setting goals may be equally challenging and time-consuming.

Although we can try to stretch the notion of outcomes to make such learning visible, focus on observable "outcomes" easily misses such learning. Students may look as if they are have learned nothing when enormous amounts of learning have taken place.

Many directions are often associated with a focus on "outcomes" which all share an interest in making learning observable and classifiable. Prior Learning portfolios, accreditation, and a common curriculum all hold interesting potential and dangers. A national literacy organization needs to examine these approaches to be able to provide complex understandings of the possibilities and pitfalls of each direction. Most importantly, they need to be part of a fight for flexibility and long term programs, and for the recognition of a wide range of more unusual outcomes.

The Literacy Problem

Economic arguments about the problem of illiteracy are always enticing. If we can make the case that people's lack of literacy skills are an economic cost to the nation, then surely money will be made available to programs that serve adults seeking to improve their literacy skills. When we argue only that literacy is about being an active citizen or important for personal fulfilment, it is harder to make the case why the ever diminishing dollar should go to literacy programming. But there are many dangers in the economic argument. This approach can lead us to the suggestion that if literacy levels are increased unemployment will decrease, which ignores a myriad of factors that create unemployment. It suggests also an individual deficit approach, where the illiteracy problem is seen simply as the individual's lack of "skills" and not the complex web of social inequalities. In such an approach only the individual needs to change, the social fabric can remain unchanged. Focus on the economic issues also directs attention to "value for money" arguments: How little can we spend to get an economic gain of increased literacy levels to benefit the economy? This can lead to a decision not to bother with those who will take too long to learn and a focus on "observable" outcomes so that "we" can see what we paid for. I think it is crucial that in the face of a tendency to slide into simple explanations of the literacy problem, a national organization resists deficit understandings of the "problem" and pushes for nuanced accounts that reveal the complexity of social issues.

The need to speak for the whole literacy field can often mean smoothing over different viewpoints. In Canada, the literacy movement often used to be criticized for being too divided. The argument went, if we couldn't get our act together and agree, how did we expect to get funding. But I often think that an analogy with politics is valid. No one criticizes politicians for not all agreeing on the same approach, the same analysis of the problem. Yet in the literacy field we are derided for not all presenting the same analysis of the problem and the organizations that represent us are encouraged to make statements that everyone can agree with. Of course, the consequence of such universal statements is the danger that they will simply be bland and innocuous. Instead of this tendency, I think there is value in an organization making the range of views visible and the complexity of different analyses clear.

Finally...

If a national literacy organization such as ACAL is to take on the sort of role I have advocated, it must support a wide variety of "spaces" for practitioners to engage in critical reflection and research, and it must support dialogue across different communities and conflicting viewpoints. Practitioners know the dangers of many conceptualizations of issues and new directions, and are readily able to spot the potential and danger of new approaches and to go beyond critique to developing creative adaptations to avoid the dangers. But to develop complex analyses, practitioners and learners in the field need time and the luxury of opportunities for in-depth reflection, discussion and analysis to tease out the issues and practical approaches with which to address them. In this way data can be generated which will support innovative views, different from the standard conceptions of literacy, and creative solutions to a wide range of problems.